Saturday Review

NOVEMBER 1980 $1.50

OCT 29 1980

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er Shaffer's "Amadeus":
ontroversial hit play

ıis Auchincloss:
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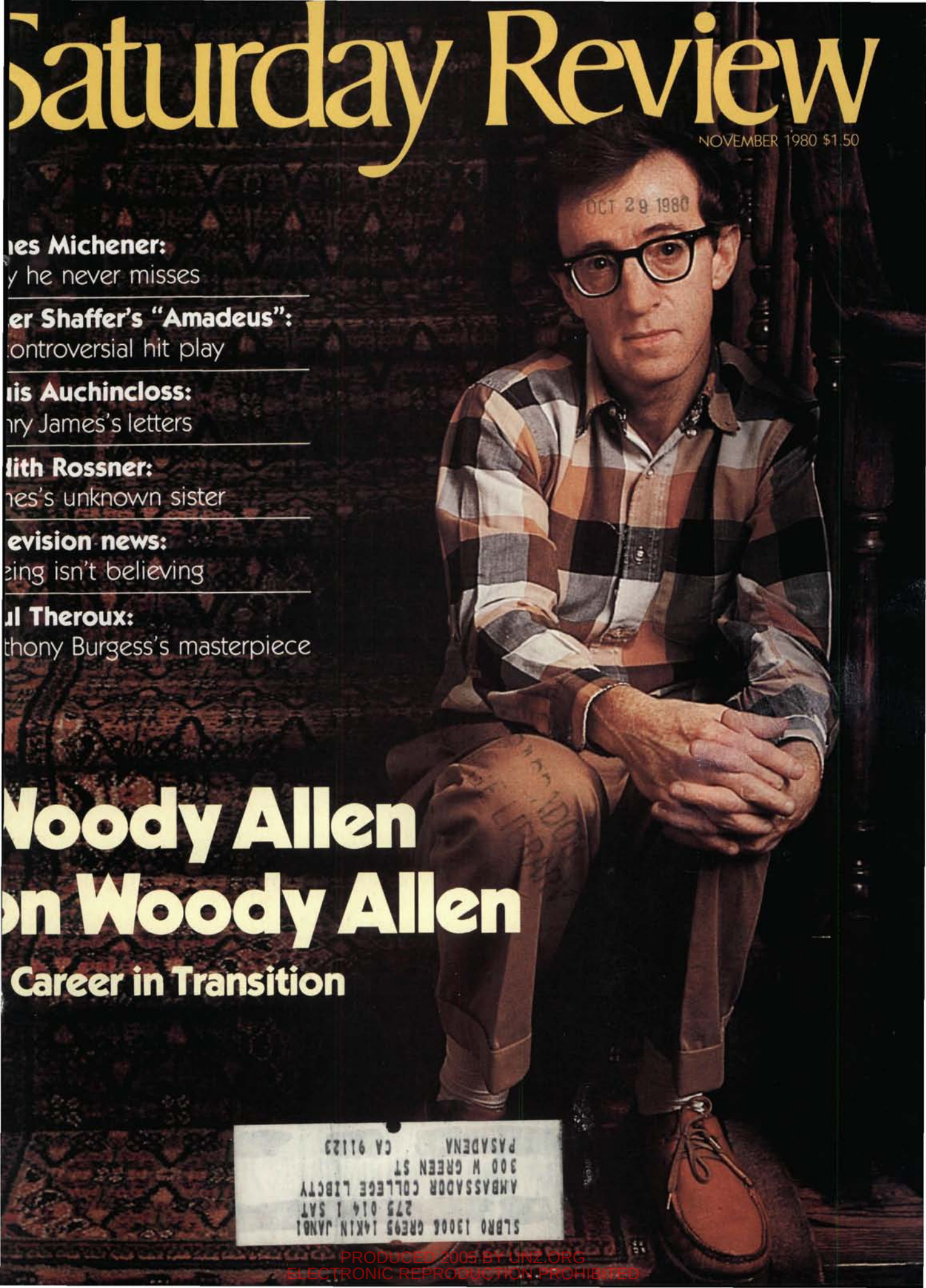

Woody Allen
on Woody Allen
Career in Transition

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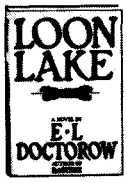
577 Pub price $12.95



169 Pub price $11.95

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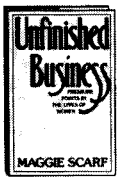

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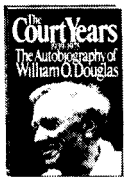

324 Pub price $16.95

304 Pub price $8.95

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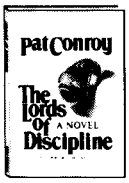
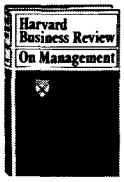


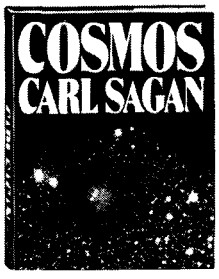
560 Pub price $12.95



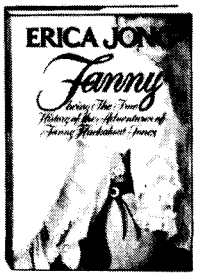
226 Pub price $19.95

173 Pub price $12.95

288 Pub price $12.95



526 Pub price $19.95



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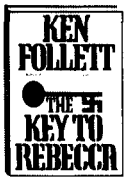

538 Pub price $12.95

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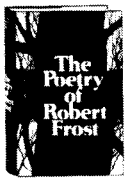

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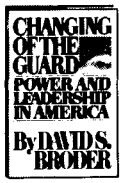
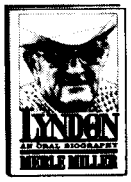
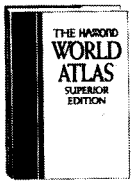


356 Pub price $14.95

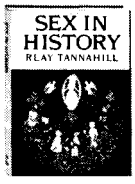
180 Pub price $10



380 Pub price $17.95

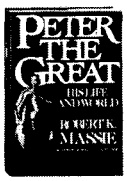


207 Pub price $12



098 Pub price $17.95

609 Pub price $12.95



598 Pub price $17.95

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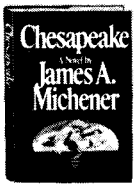
509 Pub price $10.95

320 Pub price $12.50



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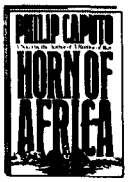

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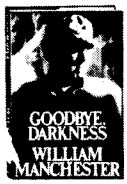

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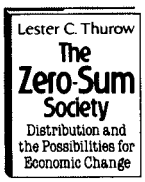

654 Pub price $12.95

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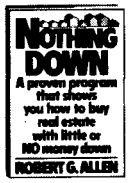

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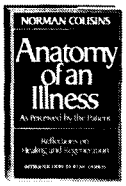

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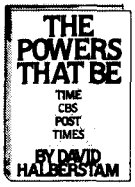
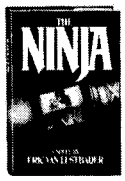
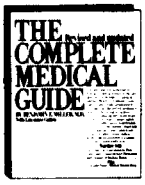


778 Pub price $15



276 Pub price $12.95



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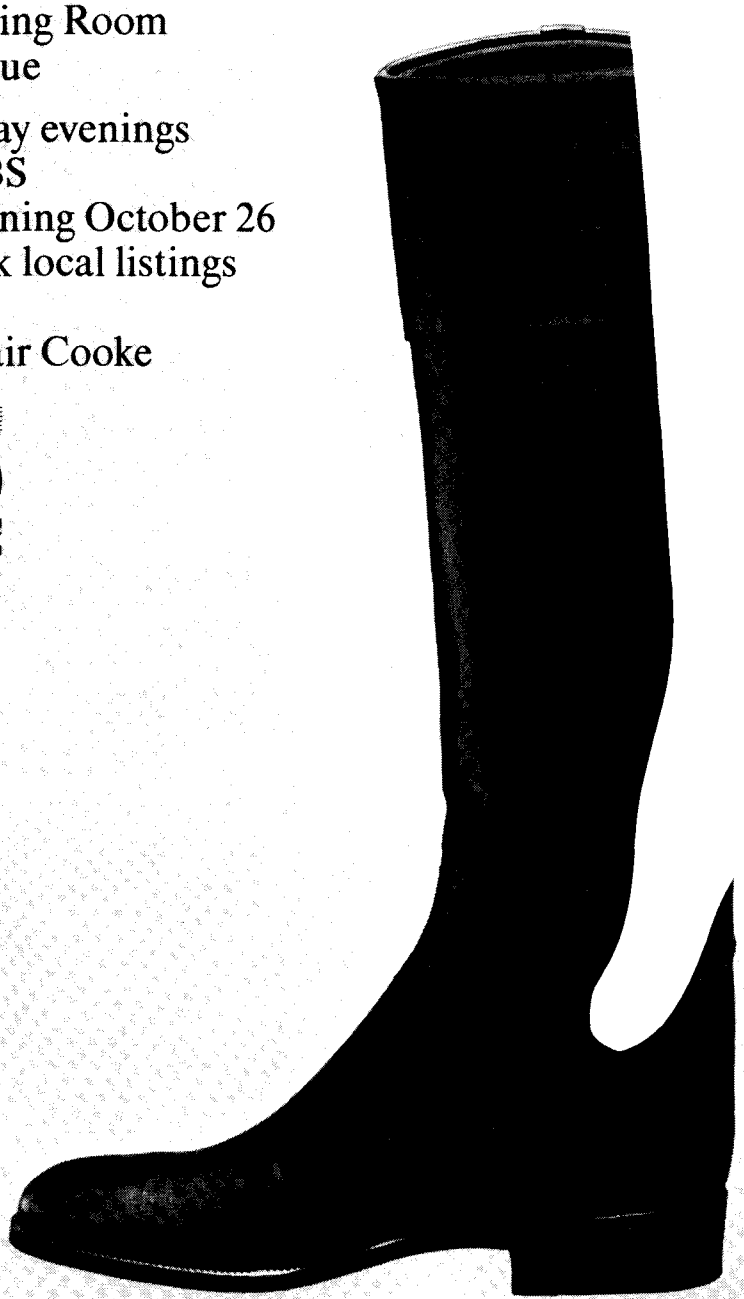

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Saturday Review NOVEMBER 1980

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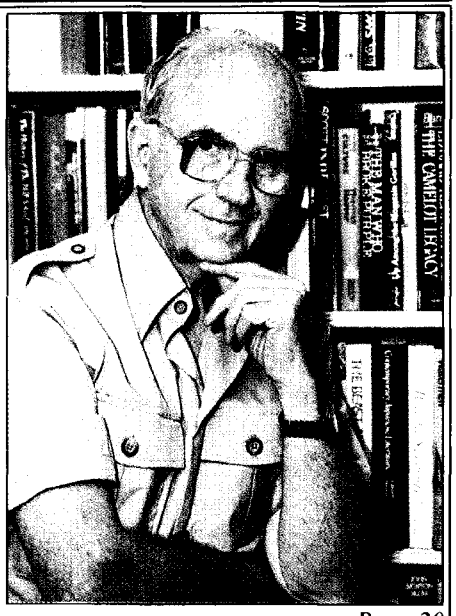

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Dr. Fritz Naumann, Manager, Completed Vehicle Testing for the Audi 5000

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An American Dialogue

The dialogue that took place between Robert Moss's article "Arthur Miller Reaches for Former Glory" and Studs Terkel's interview with Arthur Miller [September] was fascinating.

Miller's career has been a bumpy one, with some clear successes and some clear failures. Of course there is a question about whether *An American Clock* will succeed. But to me what was clear from the interview was that the measure of Miller's contribution is no longer dependent on commercial success and critical acclaim. It is his proven understanding of what makes people tick and his ability to convey the angst of life that has cemented his contribution.

Mark O'Hara
Los Angeles, California

Exile and Renewal

Reading Susan Schiefelbein's article "Russian Artists in America"[September] was a moving experience for me, one that reminded me of my own feelings nearly 25 years ago, when as a young engineering student, I left my native Hungary after the uprising of November 1956.

The most creative and gifted individuals no doubt suffer most under the restraints of Soviet society, but they are also those who can speak most nobly and articulately about an experience that has been shared in some degree by all young people of talent and intellectual independence who made the decision to flee their homes behind the Iron Curtain. In a sense, too, are they not recreating and describing anew the essential American experience of loss and renewal in the New World that links us with our new homeland's earliest settlers?

Imre Meszaros
St. Louis, Missouri

To the Big-City Snobs

Nicholas von Hoffman's article "Celebrating Mencken" [September] was well written and fair. But an accompanying picture caption stating, "... Baltimore, a city seldom regarded as a cultural hub" nettled us. Regarded by whom? The statement ignored: a first-

"I'm not kidding around anymore, Mrs. Whitman. You have our book. We have your son."

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LETTERS

rate symphony orchestra and conductor, promising ballet and opera companies, Johns Hopkins institutions, a peerless library system, a top-notch newspaper, excellent art galleries, and chamber and choral societies. And who is unfamiliar with the Peabody Institute?

This viewpoint is typical of a large group: the big-city snobs.

Blaine Crabill
Baltimore, Maryland

Jonathan Miller's Genius

Saturday Review again shows its dedication to material that stimulates the wonder at everyday phenomena, in publishing "Dr. Miller's Deft Dissection" [September]. Miller's use of metaphor is a stroke of genius. How could anyone make sense of a heart before he knew what a pump was? Or seeing death as "a newly vacated house," leaving open the hope that what left it lives on.

Cora G. Chase
Vaughn, Washington

Scotched

Perhaps your knowledgeable language expert Thomas Middleton can throw some light on Professor Galbraith's remark in his review "Terkel's America" [September] that stated "... the Macleans, like the Galbraiths, are Canadian Scotch (as properly we are called) ...."

The Universal Dictionary of the English Language edited by Henry Cecil Wyld, seems to support what I was told so many years ago: "*Scottish* or *Scots* are the forms preferred by the people themselves, and now commonly used by English writers, except in such established collocations as *Scotch whisky, Scotch terrier*, etc."

Lu Fenton
New York, New York

Bravo for Masterpiece Theatre

I was extremely impressed with the Masterpiece Theatre insert in the September issue and plan to save it for future reference. I had never really focused on the different programs as a group, and the result was rewarding and educational. Once again, it brought home the point that in this total drought of good programming from network television, Masterpiece Theatre has provided us all with a cultural oasis.

Emily Bottger
Kansas City, Kansas

An Error in Judgment

In John Canaday's article "The Sistine Ceiling Up Close" [August], the reproduction of Christ and Mary from the Last Judgment fresco is reversed. Iconographically this makes all the difference in the world, for in every Last Judgment in the history of art, the blessed always rise to the right side of Christ while the damned are waved downward to the left. Michelangelo composed his fresco accordingly, with Mary close by on his right.

Was this an error on your part, or is the $4,500 book on the Vatican frescoes in error? For that price, heaven forbid!

Michael Miller
Professor of Art History
University of Portland
Portland, Oregon

Nostra culpa.-Ed.

Friends of the Rhodes Tavern

Philip Lloyd's article "Architectural Follies" [September] requires comment. Ugliness is in the eye of the beholder. Stripped of the street level junk, the Rhodes Tavern has many architectural qualities that are not folly to preserve, such as: architectural shadows, simple and strong fenestration, textured walls, clean lines, and four square foundations, as well as its existence since 1799.

John Pine Delavan
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

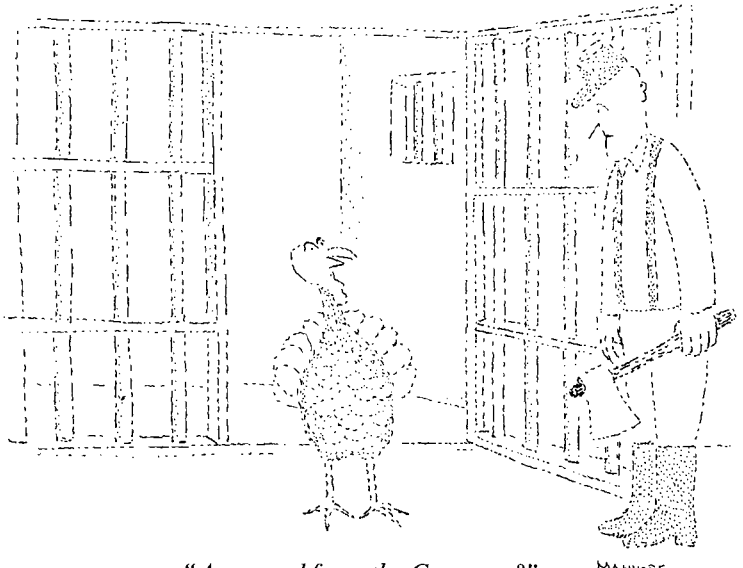
It might come as a surprise to Philip Lloyd that the quality of society is determined by something more than the personal preferences of one practicing architect, no matter how competent or articulate he may be. The citizens of Washington who are struggling to save Rhodes Tavern invite Mr. Lloyd to throw up a building of his own that will stand for two centuries. "The truth," wrote the French philosopher Albert Camus, "is that which endures."

Robert B. Gair
Co-Chairman, Committee to Preserve Rhodes Tavern
Washington, D.C.

You're Welcome

Congratulations on the new *Saturday Review*. Book reviews are back, and all areas of culture appear to be covered—films, theater, records, art, photography, and dance. Clearly now, *SR* is *the* magazine of culture in the U.S.

Robert Hudnut
Winnetka, Illinois



"Any word from the Governor?"

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Revolution in Higher Education

A professor from the University of Michigan lectured recently to a group of students on the psychological aspects of business management. This by itself is not unusual. What is unusual is that the class was being held in the conference room of a large automobile company. The students consisted of executives, assistants, and workers.

This particular course is only one of hundreds being given inside business offices, factories, churches, public schools, or private homes throughout the state of Michigan. The courses cover practically every conceivable professional or cultural need. What is important, however, is not the location of a class but the total program. All the major centers of higher education in the state, and not just the University of Michigan, are involved. Michigan State University, Wayne State University, Central Michigan University, Western Michigan University, and Eastern Michigan University all participate in a coordinated community service educational program. More than 100,000 people are enrolled in the various offerings.

Michigan may have the most far-reaching state program geographically of continuing education in the nation, but the school that reaches the largest number of people through its own efforts is the University of California, Los Angeles. Some 125,000 people are enrolled in its extension division in 1,000 courses. The other centers of the University of California system—Davis, Santa Cruz, San Diego, Berkeley, Santa Barbara, Irvine, Riverside San Francisco—all have their own continuing studies programs, reaching almost half a million people.

Programs in the field of "general studies" or continuing education are not new in the field of American higher education. Columbia University and New York University have operated such divisions for more than a half-century. What is new today is the extent to which the main business of the American university has shifted from the education of the traditional full-time student to the people in the community who seek advancement in their vocations or professions, or who are interested in pursuing knowledge for its own sake, or who look to the university as a productive way of enhancing their cultural life.

The result is that America's university plant has never been more active or more fully used than it is today. Both day and evening, the average campus is bustling in what may be an authentic revolution in American education. Only a few years ago, many college authorities were worried about rapidly declining enrollment. But university planners made a correct calculation in anticipating that their main source of future usefulness would be in the area of community service.

The campus today throbs with new life; the American university has come into its own.

The University of Southern California, for example, located as it is in the film and television capital of the world, offers a variety of courses connected with the world of entertainment. Among the faculty members for these courses are Pat O'Brien, Keenan Wynn, Art Linkletter, and Ray Bradbury. One course is on playwriting and the marketing of playscripts. Others are on writing, directing, and producing TV shows; film style analysis; comedy writing; and animation. At the other end of the spectrum, USC gives workshops in business and managerial skills.

Throughout the country, a similar variety may be observed in the courses being offered by the continuing education divisions of universities and colleges. University revenues through these divisions are substantial. What is more important is that the campus today is throbbing with new life; the American university has come into its own.

The nation's back-to-school movement, in fact, is one of the most encouraging developments on the national scene. There is the realistic prospect of a wide upgrading in the national culture. Certainly, it is no longer accurate to bemoan a lack of popular interest in the arts. Consider the evidence—apart from the general activities of the university. More people now attend concerts than baseball games. (This is not said in disparagement of baseball, which this department has always regarded not just as a sport but also as a combination of art and science.) The recent Picasso show at New York's Museum of Modern Art attracted enthusiastic visitors from all over the country, resulting in record attendance. Museums in general report high public interest. America in the 1980s may not quite be the Athens of contemporary civilization, but it has come a long way from the society of boobs made infamous by H. L. Mencken, whose hundredth birthday this year couldn't have come at a better time.—**N. C.**

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NOVEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

UNITED ARTISTS

***Heaven's Gate*: Huppert, Kristofferson.**

Film

Michael Cimino, whose Vietnam epic *The Deer Hunter* won him an Academy Award as Best Director, is now offering his latest directorial effort, **Heaven's Gate**. Filmed in the Rocky Mountains, *Heaven's Gate* tells the story of the Johnson County War of the 1890s, a bloody conflict between Wyoming cattlemen and European immigrant settlers that was as much a clash of cultures as a fight for land rights.

An impressive cast has been assembled, including John Hurt, the brilliantly maligned Caligula in the BBC version of *I, Claudius* (he also appeared in *Midnight Express* and *The Elephant Man*); Christopher Walken, dancer turned dramatic star (who won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor for his role in *The Deer Hunter*); Isabelle Huppert (voted Best Actress at Cannes for *Violette*); Sam Waterston (*The Great Gatsby, Interiors*); Jeff Bridges (*The Last Picture Show, King Kong*); folk-rocker Kris Kristofferson (*Semi-Tough, A Star Is Born*); and more than 2,500 extras. Cinematography is by Cimino's collaborator on *The Deer Hunter*, Vilmos Zsigmond (*McCabe and Mrs. Miller, Close Encounters of the Third Kind*).

Winner of the 1979 Academy Award for Best Picture, the flawed but powerful *Deer Hunter* drew as much critical disdain as praise. Now the skeptical will get another chance to take Cimino's measure as a director. (Opens November 16.)

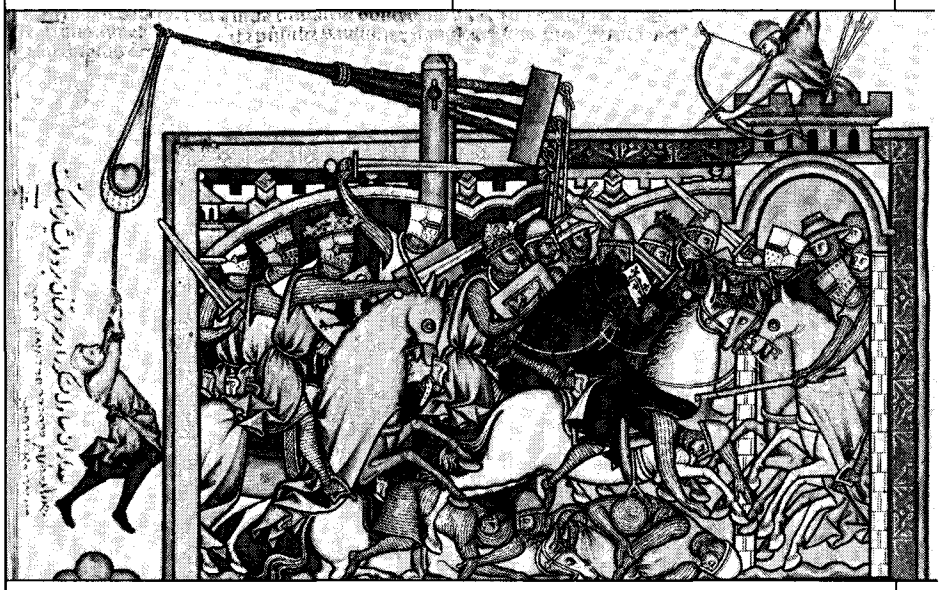
Art

The Pierpont Morgan Library's collection of medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts in New York City, certainly the most beautiful and extensive on this side of the Atlantic, is generally thought to rank among the top three or four such collections in the world. Now, **Masterpieces of Medieval Painting: The Art of Illumination,** an exhibition comprising approximately 100 illuminated manuscripts and 20 single leaves selected from the collection, is scheduled to open November 20.

Representing 10 centuries (the 6th through the 16th) of literary decoration, the exhibit will offer a sweeping view of medieval artistry, not confined solely to religious subjects. Highlights include such works as a set of Milanese tarot cards, ca. 1450, made for a member of the Visconti-Sforza family by Bonifacio Bembo; the marvelous Persian bestiary *Manafi al-Hayawan* (The Uses of Animals), ca. 1290; *Le Roman de Lancelot du Lac,* an early 14th-century version from northeastern France; *The Book of Hours* of Catherine of Cleves, ca. 1440; and *The Book of Hours* of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, ca. 1546, illustrated by Giulio Clovio, who was described by Vasari as "a new, if smaller Michelangelo." (Through February 8.)

Opera

Vivaldi's **Orlando Furioso,** an opera seria retelling the medieval tale of Roland, will receive its American premiere at the Dallas Civic Opera November 28, with additional performances scheduled for November 30 and December 3, starring mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne as Orlando. Under the baton of artistic director Nicola Rescigno (the Civic's co-



An Old Testament miniature (ca. 1250, Paris), from the Morgan Library's exhibit.

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JÜRGEN KRANICH

Orlando as played by Marilyn Horne. The *Titanic* as played by an opera house.

founder and a frequent guest conductor at the Metropolitan Opera), Orlando will be guided through trials, tribulations, and encounters with beautiful maidens and bewitching sorceresses, as he swings magic swords and visits enchanted islands. The opera is based on an epic poem by Ariosto.

Vivaldi wrote more than 50 operas, but few if any have ever been fully staged by a professional company in the United States. The Civic believes it is giving an American premiere, not only of an opera, but of an operatic composer as well. Singing with Marilyn Horne will be soprano Ellen Shade, countertenor James Bowman, bass Nicola Zaccaria, mezzo-sopranos Gwendolyn Killebrew and Rose Taylor, and tenor Dano Raffanti. In conjunction with *Orlando,* the Civic Opera will sponsor a four-day symposium, "Opera and Vivaldi: Reflections of a Changing World," with a panel featuring Ms. Horne, conductor Rescigno, set and costume designer Pier-Luigi Pizzi, and Plato Karayanis, general director of the DCO.

• • •

It's less an opera, perhaps, than a whatsis but it could be a night to remember. Wilhelm Dieter Siebert's **The Sinking of the Titanic** is booked for four performances at Royce Hall, on the University of California's Los Angeles campus, November 15, 16, 18, and 19. Described as a *Mitspieloper,* German for "participation-opera" (also tagged "a musical joke"), Siebert's musical-theatrical creation, a smash success in Berlin since its premiere there a year ago, takes place everywhere in the theater but on the stage—in the foyer, on the mezzanine floor, before the entrance doors to the opera house, and in the basement tunnels. Filing past the steerage passengers, the audience congregates outside for the festive launching ceremonies, then climbs to the foyer for a look at the goings-on in the first-class accommodations. At 11:40 — the moment the fatal iceberg hit the original *Titanic* —the show is interrupted to abandon ship.

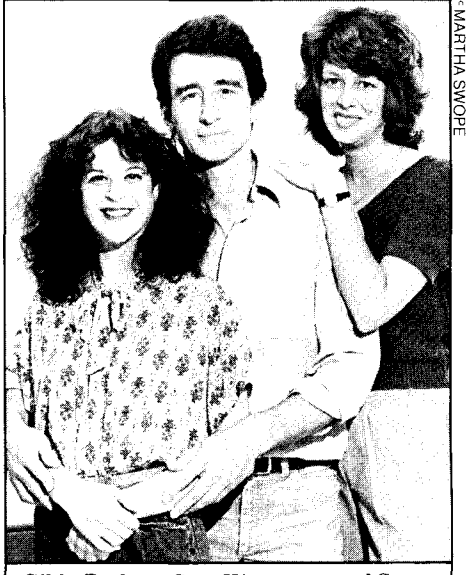
In the Los Angeles production—to be sung in English—baritone William Dooley will play a New York society-page reporter, and contralto Vera Little will lend a tragic air singing Negro spirituals in her role as a servant to a nouveau-riche social climber. The composer worked closely with director Winfried Bauernfeind and stage designer Martin Rupprecht to create this "total opera," and now American audiences can decide for themselves whether the concept is seaworthy.

Theater

As a director, Mike Nichols has given us a mixed bag of movies (*The Graduate, Catch-22, Day of the Dolphin*). But in the theater, he's usually right on target (*Barefoot in the Park, The Odd Couple, Streamers*). And as a director of stage comedy, his touch knows no equal. His sense of rhythm and variation and his instinct for off-beat—but exactly right—casting has always proven reliable in the past.

Now Nichols is returning to Broadway, once again directing a comedy. This time, the script—called **Lunch Hour**—is by Jean Kerr whose 1960 play, *Mary, Mary,* was one of the most popular Broadway comedies in recent decades. *Lunch Hour* stars Sam Waterston in the role of a marriage counselor whose own marriage is disrupted by one of his patients. The patient, in turn, begins counseling him. The role of the patient is played by Gilda Radner, best known as *Saturday Night Live*'s Roseann Roseannadanna. As we said, at first blush Nichols's casting can often appear eccentric. (Nichols and Radner have worked together before: He directed the filming of her stage revue.)

Lunch Hour opens at the Ethel Barrymore Theater in New York City on November 20.



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Gilda Radner, Sam Waterson, and Susan Kellerman from the cast of Mike Nichols and Jean Kerr's *Lunch Hour*.

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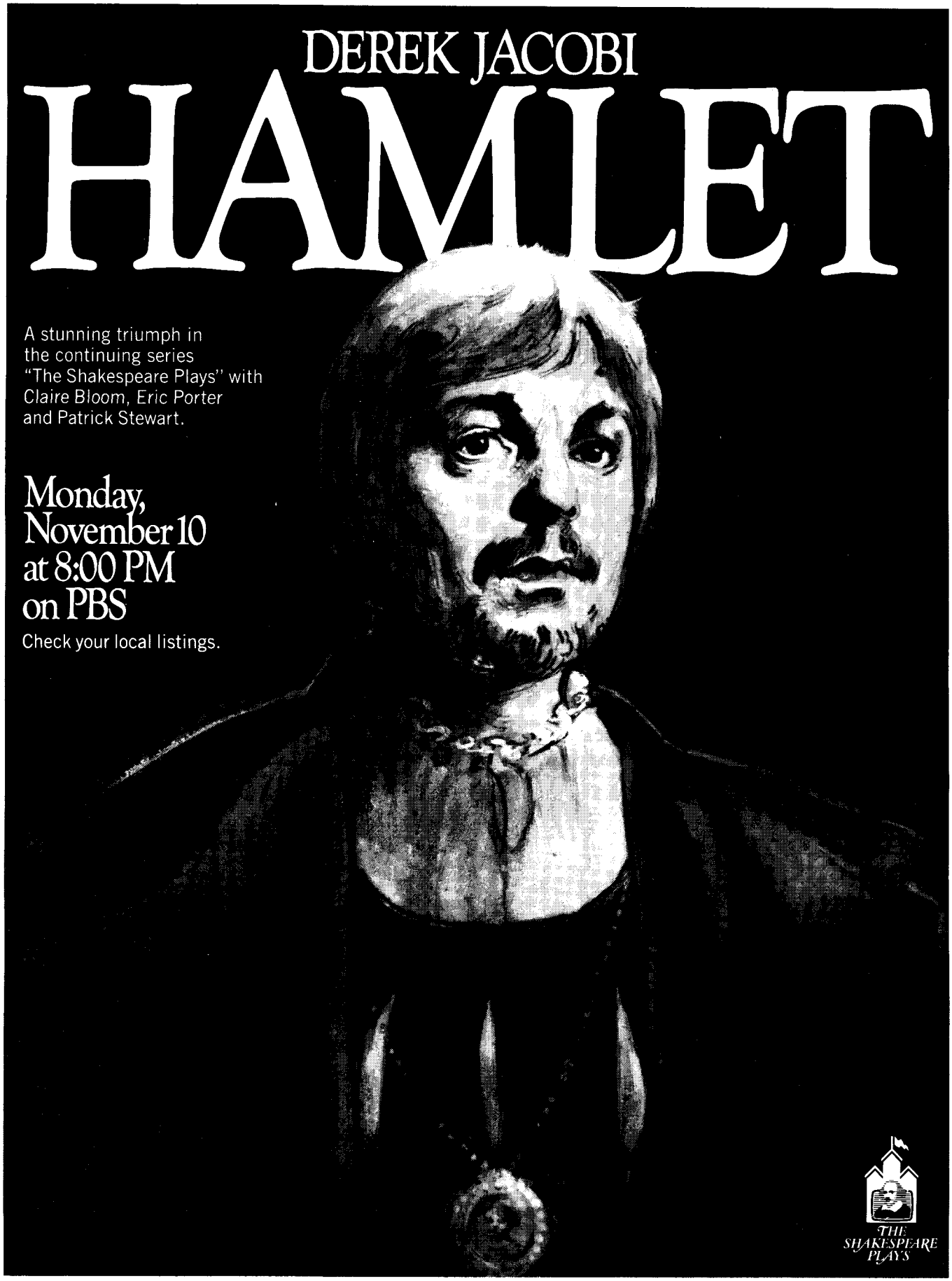
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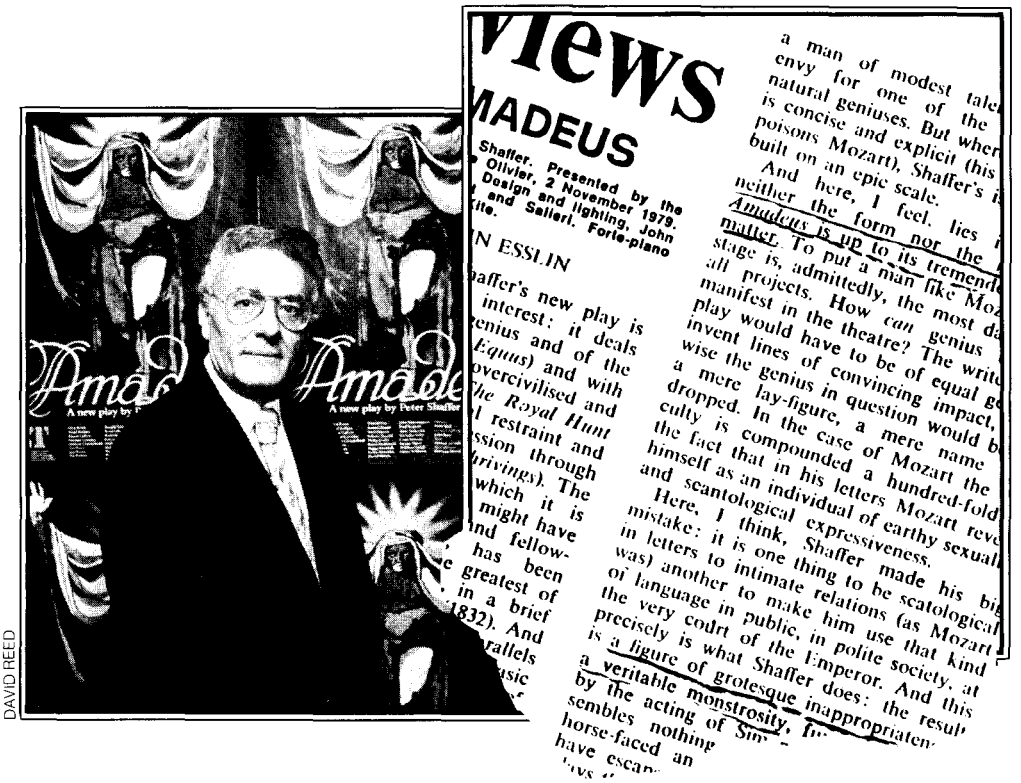
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Amade
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DAVID REED
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And here, I feel, lies
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stage is, admittedly, the most da
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Here, I think, Shaffer made his bi
mistake: it is one thing to be scatological
in letters to intimate relations (as Mozart
was) another to make him use that kind
of language in public, in polite society, at
the very court of the Emperor. And this
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Peter Shaffer's "Amadeus"

A Controversial Hit

by Roland Gelatt

With a fine disdain for the pejoratives and prejudices of the local critics, theatergoers in London last season made Peter Shaffer's new play *Amadeus* the hottest ticket in town. The title refers, of course, to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, whose last decade of ineffable accomplishment and infamous penury is depicted in the play through the baleful eyes of his archrival and nemesis, composer Antonio Salieri. This is not the stuff of which great box-office hits are ordinarily made, but *Amadeus* has been a sellout at the National Theatre from the day it opened a year ago. This month, an American production opens at the Kennedy Center in Washington, which will move to Broadway next month. French and German productions are also in the works, and already there is talk of making a film version. In short, *Amadeus* seems destined for much the same kind of success that befell Shaffer's *Equus* and *Royal Hunt of the Sun*.

Unlike those previous plays, however, the new work has been pummeled unmercifully in the press. To James Fenton, theater critic of the London *Sunday Times*, it is "a perfectly nauseating load of—to use a word much loved by Peter Shaffer—shit." Week after week, this paper's capsule listing of current theatrical fare describes *Amadeus* as "appalling"—an adjective that Fenton considers "a somewhat generous word under the circumstances." For him, "Shaffer's Mozart is depicted with a dreadful and offensive banality." For Martin Esslin, writing in *Plays and Players*, he is "a figure of grotesque inappropriateness, a veritable monstrosity." For John Walker, in the newsweekly *Now!*, "Shaffer has created the most anally obsessed character in drama since John Osborne's Luther." And for B.A. Young, in the *Financial Times*, the play is "as hollow as a strip-cartoon." It has been left to the music critics, to the *Times*'s irrepressible columnist Bernard Levin, and to the cheering audiences at the National Theatre to right the balance. Could it be that they understand Mozart more profoundly and have a firmer grasp of what Shaffer is trying to convey than London's drama reviewers?

Undeniably, Mozart's first appearance on stage comes as a rude shock, particularly to those whose image of the composer is that of a delicate and seraphic archangel. He enters the play, a short jackanapes of a fellow, showily and tastelessly overdressed, mimicking

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a meowing cat in pursuit of his wife-to-be Constanze. Dropping on all fours, he stalks his prey, who squeaks—mouselike—from under a 1780-vintage piano. Catching Constanze in his paws, so to speak, Mozart jumps on top of her and begins to talk dirty, not so much sexy dirty as excremental dirty. This is not how we usually envision the composer of "Et incarnatus est" and "In diesen heil'gen Hallen," and the contrast has clearly set a lot of critical teeth on edge.

Nonetheless, everything in the scene is based on historical fact. Caroline Pichler, a bluestocking and rather prim poet and diarist of the period, writes that Mozart was in the habit of jumping up from the piano, springing over chairs, and meowing like a cat. She goes on: "Mozart and Haydn, whom I knew well, were persons who displayed in their contact with others absolutely no other extraordinary intellectual capacity and almost no kind of intellectual training, or scientific or higher education. Everyday character, silly jokes, and in the case of the former [Mozart] an irresponsible way of life were all that they displayed to their fellow men." As for the "grotesque inappropriateness" of Mozart's puerile prattle and scatalogical gutter talk, it is all to be found in the three volumes of the composer's collected correspondence. *Amadeus* is the work of a writer who has done his homework fastidiously well.

More than that, it is the work of a writer with an extraordinary empathy for music. But then Peter Shaffer is no newcomer to the world of Mozart. The scion of a well-to-do family in the north of England, he studied the piano from a tender age. The playwright looks back on that early initiation with obvious gratitude. "I had a succession of teachers and reached the point where I could play the sonatas of Mozart and Haydn and the less demanding works of Chopin with a fair degree of proficiency. Music has been a source of immense pleasure to me ever since, and hardly a day goes by when I do not spend at least an hour playing the piano. I find that ideas tend to rearrange themselves in the proper order at the keyboard, and this can be very helpful when one is in the throes of working out a plot."

Shaffer, 54, first appeared in print with an article written for the *Musical Times* (the subject of of which he now professes to have forgotten), in 1941. Three years later, he was drafted for national service, heaving loads of carbide and rock from the pithead of a mine in Kent. There followed four years at Trinity College,

PHOTOS BY NOBBY CLARK

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Cambridge, where he majored in history and — along with his twin brother Anthony, the future author of *Sleuth*—helped edit the college paper *Granta*. With a degree in his pocket, he set off for New York in 1951 and tried his hand at a miscellany of odd jobs, among them that of a salesman at the Doubleday Bookshop in Grand Central Station.

Back in London three years later, Shaffer found work through a family connection with the music publishers Boosey and Hawkes. "I earned around £10 a week and stayed there quite happily for about two years, editing catalogues and so forth. One day a director of the firm took me into his office and said they were prepared to offer me a really promising position in the band instrument division. But somehow I didn't see my future managing a factory, even one making trombones and trumpets, so I thanked him very much and quit. It was quite a precarious step to take, because I had no money at all, but I already had had one play produced on television, and the risk seemed worth it." Within a couple of years, Peter Shaffer had landed his first hit in the West End: *Five Finger Exercise*.

Scenes from the National Theatre's production of *Amadeus* in London. Left: Paul Scofield as Antonio Salieri. Middle: Scofield as Salieri between actors Dermot Crowley (left) and Donald Gee. Right: Simon Callow in Peter Shaffer's controversial characterization of Mozart, with Felicity Kendal as Constanze Weber.

Before his next hit, however, Shaffer did a two-year stint as weekly book reviewer for the now-defunct magazine *Truth,* and in 1961 became music critic for *Time and Tide*, another now-defunct British weekly. But his reputation was made as a playwright by *The Private Ear and the Public Eye* (1962), *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), *Black Comedy* (1965), *Shrivings* (1970), and *Equus* (1973). It was shortly after finishing *Equus* that he came upon the curious incident that would lead eventually to *Amadeus*. "There is a tradition that a terrible storm raged in Vienna the day Mozart was buried, and that because of it his mourners never reached the graveyard. Well, I came across an article by someone who had looked up the weather records for 1791 and had discovered that the day of Mozart's burial wasn't at all stormy. This started me on a train of speculation. Why had the mourners consistently stuck to their story about the bogus storm? Was it a conspiracy? Had they all decided on a convenient excuse for denying knowledge of just where Mozart's grave was located so that nobody would be able to carry out an exhumation and postmortem? If so, whom were they protecting? Could it have been Antonio Salieri, who would much later claim to have poisoned Mozart? I thought I detected the kernel of a drama here, and I made a few notes.

"Later I learned that the legend of the storm dates from more than 50 years after Mozart's death. That knocked my conspiracy theory into a cocked hat. But by then the cold eyes of Salieri were staring at me, and what had started as an idle speculation about a seemingly sinister set of circumstances began to acquire quite other dimensions. The conflict between virtuous mediocrity and feckless genius took hold of my imagination, and it would not leave me alone."

We can now return to the moment of Mozart's entrance in the library of Baroness Waldstätten, a scene which instantly highlights the paradox that is at the root of Shaffer's play—the seemingly inexplicable contrast between Mozart's divine inspiration and the common clay from which it issued. For the Mozart in *Amadeus* is not only consistently and impolitically foul-mouthed, but also vain, arrogant, totally wrapped up in himself, and childishly insensitive to the feelings of others. He is, in addition, the most perfectly formed, the most astonishingly fertile, the most celestial musical genius who ever lived.

To give dramatic conflict to this extraordinary dichotomy, the playwright counterpoises the figure of Antonio Salieri—a virtuous husband, dedicated to serving God and his fellow man, charming and perspicacious, thoroughly grounded in the science of music, and wholly content, as he affirms in the play, to join with his colleagues in building "a vast Palace of Sound." Honors and rewards are showered upon him in his lifetime, but it is Salieri's harsh fate to recognize with painful clarity the infinite chasm separating his ordinary talent from Mozart's God-given genius.

Shaffer orchestrates this gripping and fascinating conflict with consummate skill and delicious wit in *Amadeus*. Salieri voices the nub of it in his riveting jeremiad at the end of Act One, when he bitterly apostrophizes the false God who has failed him:

> Tonight at an inn somewhere in this city stands a giggling child who can put on paper, without actually setting down his billiard cue, casual notes which turn my most considered ones into lifeless scratches. *Grazie Signore!* You gave me the desire to serve you — which most men do not have — then saw to it that the service was shameful in the ears of the server. *Grazie!* You gave me the desire to praise you — which most men do not have — then made me mute. *Grazie tanti!* You put into me perception of the Incomparable — which most men never know! — then ensured that I would know myself forever mediocre. [*His voice gains power*] *Why? . . . What is my fault?* . . . Until this day I have pursued virtue with rigour. I have laboured long hours to relieve my fellow men. I have worked and worked the talent you allowed me. [*Calling up*] *You know how hard I've worked!* — Solely that in the end, in the practice of the art which alone makes the world comprehensible to me, I might hear Your Voice! And now I do hear it — and it says only one name:

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Despite the critical carping and vituperation over "Amadeus," no other play at London's National Theatre has ever created such long lines at the box office.

MOZART! ... Spiteful, sniggering, conceited, infantile Mozart! — who has never worked one minute to help another man! — shit-talking Mozart with his botty-smacking wife! — *him you* have chosen to be your sole conduct! And *my* only reward — my sublime privilege — is to be the sole man alive in this time who shall clearly recognize your Incarnation!

And therein lies the clue to the paradox of Mozart. For the Salieri of Shaffer's play persuades himself—and what better explanation can there be?—that the corporeal Mozart, the foul-mouthed jackanapes, speaks as a composer with, quite literally, the voice of God. This throws an entirely new light on Salieri's supposed enmity toward Mozart and to the legend (quite at variance with the facts, by the way) that he hastened his rival's death by poison. For Mozart posed no threat to Salieri's career. Quite the contrary, it was Salieri who was feted in his lifetime and Mozart who remained the largely neglected outsider. No, the motive for Salieri's malevolence in the play is something else altogether. It is that he recognizes in Mozart the chosen vessel—the very incarnation—of the God who has condemned him to unmitigated mediocrity. What better way to thwart God, then, than to rid the world of his divinely inspired messenger?

It is one thing, however, to accept the historical Mozart as a figure of celestial genius and quite another for us to suspend disbelief sufficiently to accept a mere actor as a believable surrogate. Shaffer solves this difficulty in *Amadeus* by larding the play with snatches from Mozart's masterpieces. The lines may be spoken by an actor, but the music we hear is that of *The Marriage of Figaro, Don Giovanni,* the Piano Concerto in A major, the C minor Mass.

Perhaps the most telling use of music in the play occurs midway in Act One when Salieri, ever the polished courtier, performs a trite march of his own devising to welcome Mozart to the Imperial Court at Schoenbrunn Palace. After the Emperor and his minions depart, Mozart is left on stage alone with Salieri. He sits down at the keyboard and plays Salieri's March of Welcome from memory. Then he starts to play it again and stops after seven bars ....

MOZART: It doesn't really *work*, that Fourth — does it? ... Let's try the Third above ....

[*He does so — and smiles happily.*]

Ah yes! ... Good! ...

[*He repeats the new interval, leading up to it smartly with the well-known military-trumpet arpeggio which characterizes the celebrated March from* The Marriage of Figaro, *"Non piu andrai." Then, using the interval — tentatively — delicately — one note at a time, in the treble — he steals into the famous tune itself.*] *

Could there be a more convincing demonstration of Mozart's genius, or a more damaging example of his insensitivity to others, than this casual transformation of earthbound banality into immortal invention?

There can be no doubt about the success of *Amadeus* in London, despite the chorus of carping and vituperation from the local reviewers. Not since the National Theatre opened its doors in 1976 has any play elicited such interest or created such long lines at the box office. At a time when the contemporary theater has increasingly become the domain of frothy comedies, arty variations on the eternal triangle, or modish exercises in nihilism and despair, *Amadeus* gives heartening evidence that there is still room for the play of ideas. Peter Shaffer has dared to address himself to a challenging and enthralling theme: the eternal mystery of genius—and the anguish many of us suffer recognizing how far short of genius our own best efforts fall. ■

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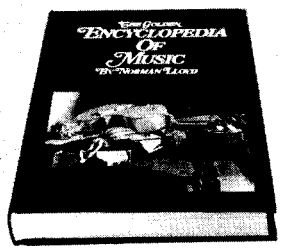

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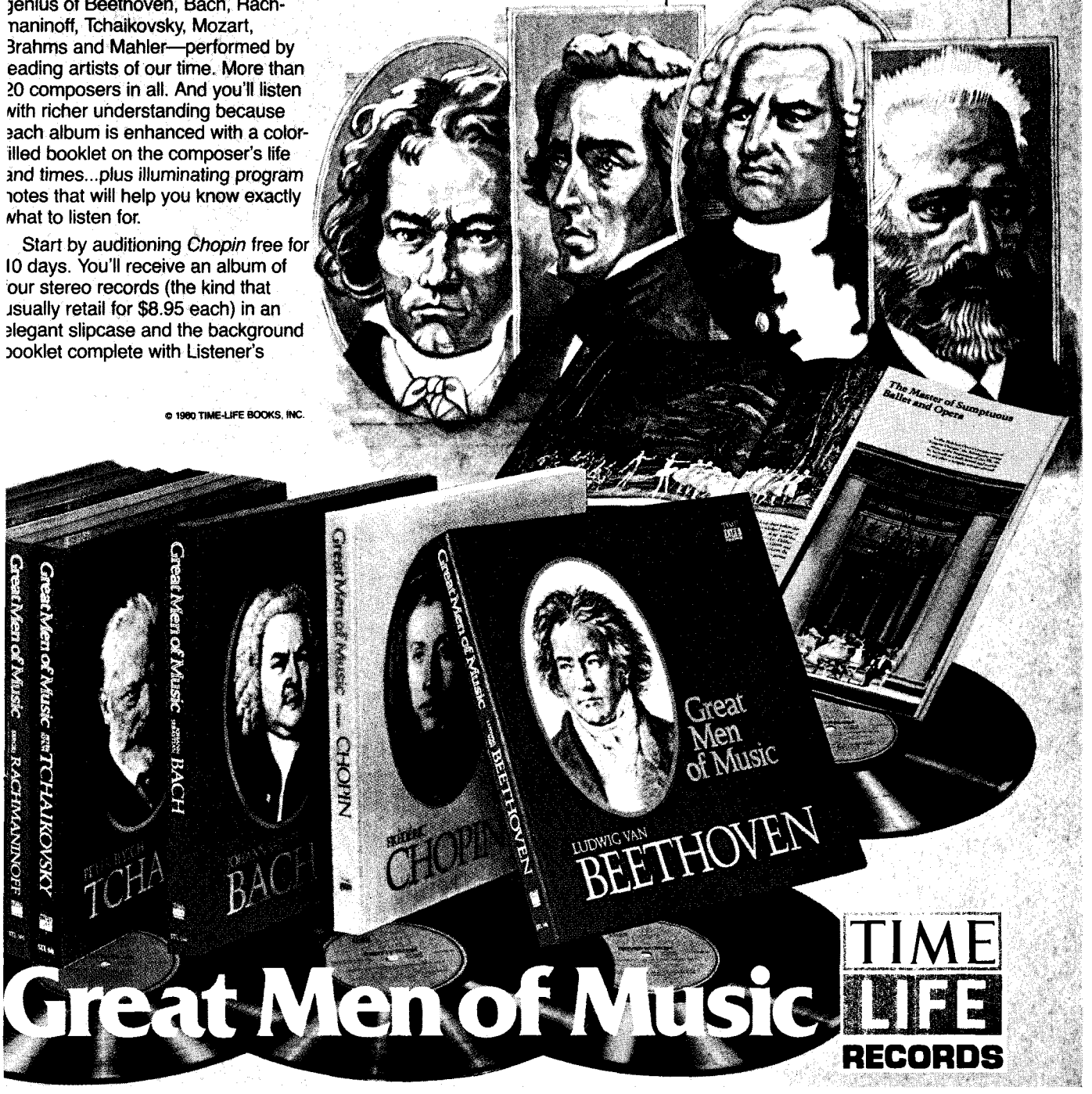

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Why Michener Never Misses

by Herbert Mitgang

James A. Michener won the Pulitzer Prize in 1947 for his first novel, *Tales of the South Pacific.* It can be predicted that he will not receive a second Pulitzer for his new novel and twenty-third book, *The Covenant,* which Random House brings out on November 24. It can also be predicted that, with a first printing of 300,000 copies in hardcover and as a main selection of the Literary Guild in December, the novel will soar to the top of the best-seller lists in this country and be read and admired all over the world.

Michener's reputation among critics has declined—even as his popularity has soared—since *Tales of the South Pacific.* Those short stories were admired by Orville Prescott, in both the *New York Times* and the *Yale Review,* as "fresh, original and moving," and Prescott's reviews helped to start the encomiums that eventually led to Michener's Pulitzer Prize.

When Michener wrote *The Fires of Spring* (1949), about a writer's search for integrity, he moved on to more familiar ground. This time, several reviewers found his theme, in fact, overfamiliar and his sentiments naive. In *The Bridges of Toko-Ri* (1953), some critics claimed that his characters lacked depth. One noted, "Sure, his pilots are good Americans and two-dimensional human beings, yet what they do and feel and say sounds too frequently more like the Voice of America than fine art."

His epic novels have been both praised for their facts and deplored for their characterizations. One critic called him the "Pepys of the Pacific" after he wrote *Hawaii* (1959), saying that it was a "masterful job of research, an absorbing performance of story-telling," yet adding that he has gone "beyond the image as far as historical fact, reasonable supposition, and the limits of his imagination have permitted him." When *The Source* appeared (1965), the research and history were greatly admired, but some critics found the main characters in the Israel-based novel more symbols than flesh-and-blood people.

His reputation did not soar when he wrote, with great goodwill, *Kent State, What Happened and Why,* in 1971. Liberal critics found the author somewhat too objective and generous in his interpretation of those controversial events. In *Time,* Ed Magnuson wrote, "Though he is also a novelist, Michener does not show a disciplined novelist's skills in the telling of this fatal drama. His account is disorganized and repetitious." Antiwar critics felt he was not hard enough on the National Guardsmen and those above them who had tolerated the shootings.

At 73, Michener remains America's most popular serious novelist.

Nevertheless, at 73, Michener remains America's most popular *serious* novelist; I emphasize the word serious to distinguish him from the trash-masters and trash-mistresses grinding out what the book trade brands "popcorn for the eyes." Some other best-selling novelists—Sidney Sheldon, Harold Robbins, Judith Krantz—clearly aim for the same middle-brow reader. And by doing so, they too cannot be expected to be considered for kudos from the National Book Critics Circle or the Pulitzer judges. But there are clear distinctions between their works and Michener's. Sheldon, Robbins, Krantz, and other calculatedly popular authors seem to be trendier in their themes, sexier in their scenes, and easily identified by their slick characterizations.

Another difference, it has often been pointed out, is that Michener "gives you your money's worth"—his books are long and compendious with facts. Readers have to work harder at his novels than at many other best-sellers. Michener presents what he conceives would help the reading public to understand a subject, a lifestyle, or a country. He would not be offended at being called an educator in his novels. Many other best-selling novelists have less desire to educate than to entertain—and to have room left over for their next entertainment.

But most of all, other best-selling novelists often seem to take dead aim at the marketplace—at what the public wants. This does not appear to be Michener's aim. He seems to be offering what *he* wants to do, to be exploring locales and histories that intrigue *him.* In this respect, he most resembles Herman Wouk, whose big novels also grapple with war, prejudice, courage, and morality without the internalizing, subjective writing, and emphasis on ambiguous character of, say, the two American Nobel laureates, Saul Bellow and Isaac Bashevis Singer. Yet despite Michener's apparent determination to write first of all for himself, his novels have attained as loyal a following among a wide cross-section of readers as did the stories of Charles Dickens in the last century.

This much is certain: People read a Michener novel because he is the author, not necessarily because of its

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locale or particular theme. *The Covenant* is set in South Africa. *The Source* had its roots in Israel. *Hawaii, Caravans, Iberia, Sayonara, Centennial,* and *Chesapeake* took place in various parts of the globe, including the United States. Each bears the Michener benchmark: material researched on the scene, not merely in libraries, blending real and fictional characters, delivering romance, adventure, and history, often at length. His new novel is 878 pages.

The Covenant is in the epic tradition that Michener has set for himself. It begins in the mists of South African history, 15,000 years ago, and comes up to the present; it does not evade such issues as apartheid, though the author, a Quaker of enormous goodwill, has an inclination to ameliorate and present all sides. Michener is well aware of the meaning of prejudice and tolerance. He has been married for 25 years to Mari Yoriko Sabusawa, an American of

ALEX WASINSKI

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Japanese descent, who spent time in a California internment camp after Pearl Harbor. Researching *The Covenant,* Michener spoke to every sector of South African society: black, colored, Indian, Afrikaner, and English.

That education through fiction which is not faction (as some nonfiction novels are called) can be gauged by reading the new book's four pages of acknowledgments. Among the hundreds of people and subjects mentioned by the author: experts on early man, dealers in diamonds, colored communities, Boer War historians, persons who spent time in concentration camps, black leaders, English and Afrikaners, and gamekeepers all over the continent. At the end of the novel, there is a two-page glossary of words from the various tribes and cultures. Yet despite all Michener's efforts at objectivity, the South African government early in September banned *The Covenant* as an "undesirable" book, meaning it cannot be sold there.

But it is this striving for verisimilitude in his narratives that has resulted in the large interest and sales of his books—all of which remain in print in hardcover editions. *Caravans,* published in 1963, has sold 102,000 copies; *The Source,* 1965, about 400,000; *Iberia,* a travel book that came out in 1968, some 130,000; *Centennial,* a 1974 novel, 460,000; *Chesapeake,* his 1978 novel, an astonishing 900,000 in hardcover, with 3 million in print as a Fawcett Books paperback.

To the tens of millions of copies of Michener works in paperback editions must be added the Book-of-the-Month Club selections of most of his big novels (*The Covenant* is an exception; it was obtained by the Literary Guild), the excerpts in the magazines, especially by the *Reader's Digest*, which condensed his new novel in two summer issues, and the occasional essays and reportage in newspapers. Of course, the Michener popularity extends into other entertainment forms. *South Pacific* became one of the great musicals of the century, and it is still a favorite on the road, probably playing somewhere every week in the United States. Chunks of Michener's books have been bitten off into television series, and the author has served as the host of his own TV show.

What is the secret of his popularity—the Michener magic touch? Readers send Michener about a hundred letters a week, and somehow he manages to respond to nearly all of them personally rather than in a form letter. Certain themes recur in these reader letters: "You have developed a universe I can live in for awhile . . . . I hated it when your book ended . . . . I carried *Iberia* with me on a trip through Spain . . . . I went to Israel because of *The Source* . . . . If I could teach geology as well as you did in *Centennial,* I'd be a better teacher . . . . I have a name [or live in a town] that's similar to the one in your book."

To a young man from West Germany, Michener replied: "No, your letter was not boring because it brought to mind those wonderful days in Pamplona . . . . A writer never knows how his books are received and I was glad you shared your experiences as a result of *The Drifters* with me. Most warmly, J.A.M."

To a woman in Pittsburgh who had questioned a detail of fact in *Centennial,* he responded: "You astonish me. It never occurred to me that your hometown would not have had a Baptist church at that time. I pondered as to what religion I should make the obliging minister, and did not want to say merely Protestant, as that seems too vague. So I chose Baptists as having a nice rural American touch. (I still like the sound.) Thank you for having written and pointed out my historical error. I appreciate it when people react to my books. And I am still astonished."

A woman in Queens, New York, who praised his treatment of geese and crabs in *Chesapeake* received a surprising lecture: "I must warn you that some critics raise the Devil when writers give animals human characteristics; I try to avoid this failing known as 'the pathetic fallacy.' So never tell a writer he has made his animals seem human!"

A public official in South Africa of French Huguenot ancestry wrote Michener a long letter in anticipation of his new novel—hoping that it would help explain his own country to *him.* He received this reply: "Your country is very much on my mind these days, so it was especially meaningful to me when your very interesting letter arrived. I appreciated very much what you had to say about my books and hope that my forthcoming one will enlist your attention . . . . Like you, I have a great diversity of interests, which is helpful in some ways, damaging in others."

His long-time editor at Random House, Albert Erskine, explains Michener's appeal from an editor's viewpoint: "Jim is not simply writing entertainment. People feel they learn a lot from him. He has the ability to anticipate developments in different parts of the world long before they happen. *Hawaii* came out just ahead of statehood; *The Source* when important events were taking place in Israel. As for *The Covenant,* you can't pick up the newspaper without finding stories about South Africa or Rhodesia. He doesn't deliberately set his novels in these places but, rather, senses that they contain the seeds of great events. There are similarities of style, but each one of his books is different. He never repeats himself with localities or events.

"I think it's remarkable that a man could write the kind of thing I do—lengthy, intricate, not dependent on sex or violence—and acquire the readership I have."

"You know, Michener hasn't got very many competitors who can do what he can in a novel. First, he's a superb researcher-reporter. He lives in the places he writes about. Second, he creates believable characters so that readers constantly say that they hate to come to the end of his books. Next, he seems to be getting more skillful, sentence by sentence, in his writing. I've been his editor since *The Bridges of Toko-Ri* in 1953. He is always open to suggestions—expanding certain scenes or changing the length or proportion of a section. In the past, some of the critics were snide about his novels but in recent years he has received more respect for what he has achieved. I notice that some of the very literary critics like the books in spite of themselves."

Owen Laster, who succeeded Helen Strauss as his literary agent at William Morris, suggests: "He's popular because he tells a wonderful story, you sense you've learned something—information of a large nature—the

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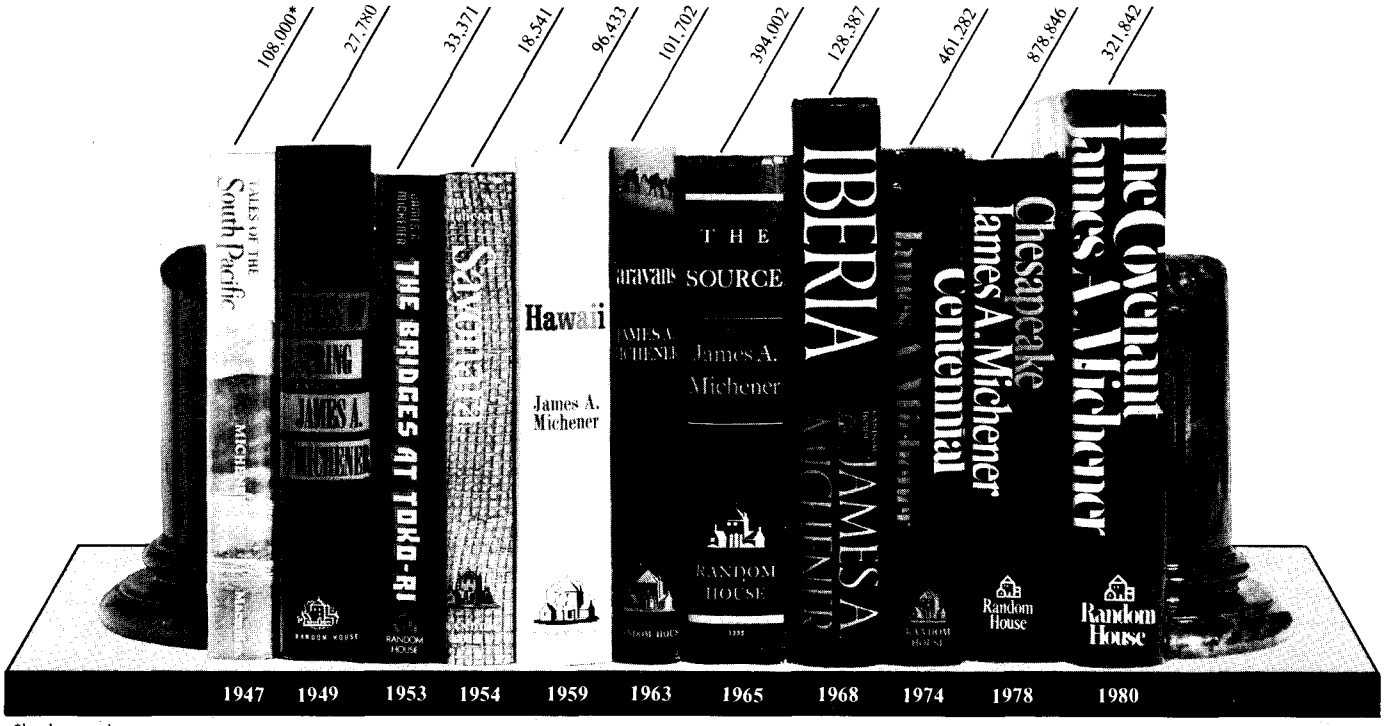

*hardcover sales

A Shelf of Michener

families in his novels constantly connect, and the reader feels absorbed in his characters and expanded after finishing one of his books."

Michener himself can poke fun at his own popularity. He once wrote, "In recent years, I have received an extraordinary amount of praise for my 'other books.' At a party some enthusiastic woman who obviously finds much enjoyment in books rushes up and cries, 'Mr. Michener, I can't thank you enough for your great novel about Hawaii. Tell me, how did you have the energy to write *From Here to Eternity*?' ... I must confess, however, that the public at large seems to feel that as good as *Eternity* was, first place has got to go to my hilarious novel of the Pacific, *Mister Roberts*."

In fact, Michener expresses surprise about his wide appeal. He had just returned from Poland—which could be the scene of a future novel—when we spoke to him. "I think it's remarkable that a man could write the kind of thing I do," he said, "—lengthy, intricate, not dependent on sex or violence—and acquire the readership I have.

"There may be some reasons. Through long apprenticeship, I learned about sentences and paragraphs. The only talent I have is that if I described a chair in a paragraph, I think I could make the reader stay to the end of that paragraph.

"From an intellectual viewpoint, I have a terrific compulsion to communicate. I'm very careful about the construction of a narrative. I've pondered this a good deal. I'm never easy until the structure falls into place. That is a matter of art—something I learned from music and painting and good literature.

"Then there is the choice of subject matter. I had a very good education—Swarthmore, the University of Northern Colorado, St. Andrews in Scotland, Harvard, and other colleges where I studied and taught. Some people have said I have a good sense of timing, but I don't think it works that way. Computers couldn't do it. You couldn't do *The Source* in the abstract. Education interests me. I think I have a didactic streak and probably would have been a good lawyer or college professor. The opening of *Hawaii* is widely used in geology courses in some schools."

Michener said that for *The Covenant* he made three extended visits to South Africa. He was treated courteously by every segment of the country, and his phone rang constantly with offers for assistance and untrammeled discussion. In Soweto, he spent five days speaking to black leaders for and against the government; three days were spent under government supervision, two nights on his own. He had forthright discussions with Afrikaners who believed in apartheid, met with banned persons, both black and white.

Did he expect that *The Covenant* would encounter trouble from the authorities in South Africa? "When it is read as a whole," he replied, "it will be seen as an ecumenical treatment. Some diehards may resent the book. But for a novelist, the people must come first. One idea predominated as I began this novel. I had respect and affection for this country, and I wished it well. I prayed that it would negotiate successfully the dangerous years ahead." But the mere mention of apartheid—even in fiction—can result in censorship in South Africa. **Yet last month, South Africa suddenly reversed its ban and now *The Covenant* can appear there.**

The irony is that, for all his success, Michener remains essentially a man of goodwill. Although the sales of his books and the shows they've inspired have made him a wealthy man, he lives quietly in a home in Pipersville, Pennsylvania, and in a cottage in St. Michaels, Maryland. He and his wife have established scholarships for many college students and they frequently aid poets, artists, and authors in distress. The Micheners have given millions of dollars to individuals and institutions. The compassion he expresses for his fellow-authors is a mark of the man; and perhaps the truest secret of his popularity is that this compassionate touch carries over into his novels. ■

Herbert Mitgang is publishing correspondent of the *New York Times* and the author of a dozen books in the fields of fiction, history, and biography.

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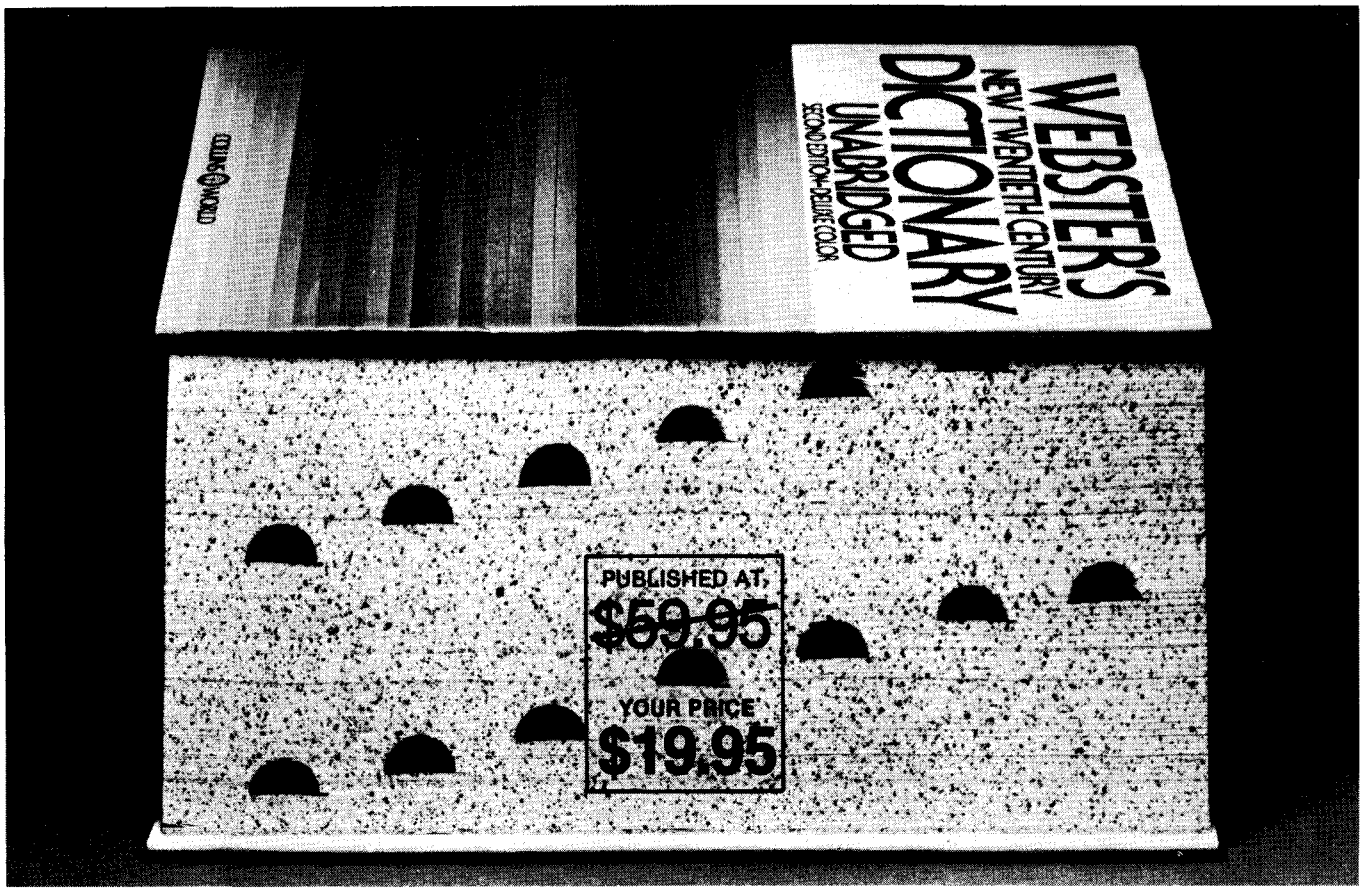

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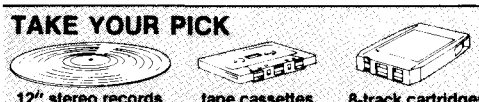

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Television News

Seeing Isn't Believing

by Peter Funt

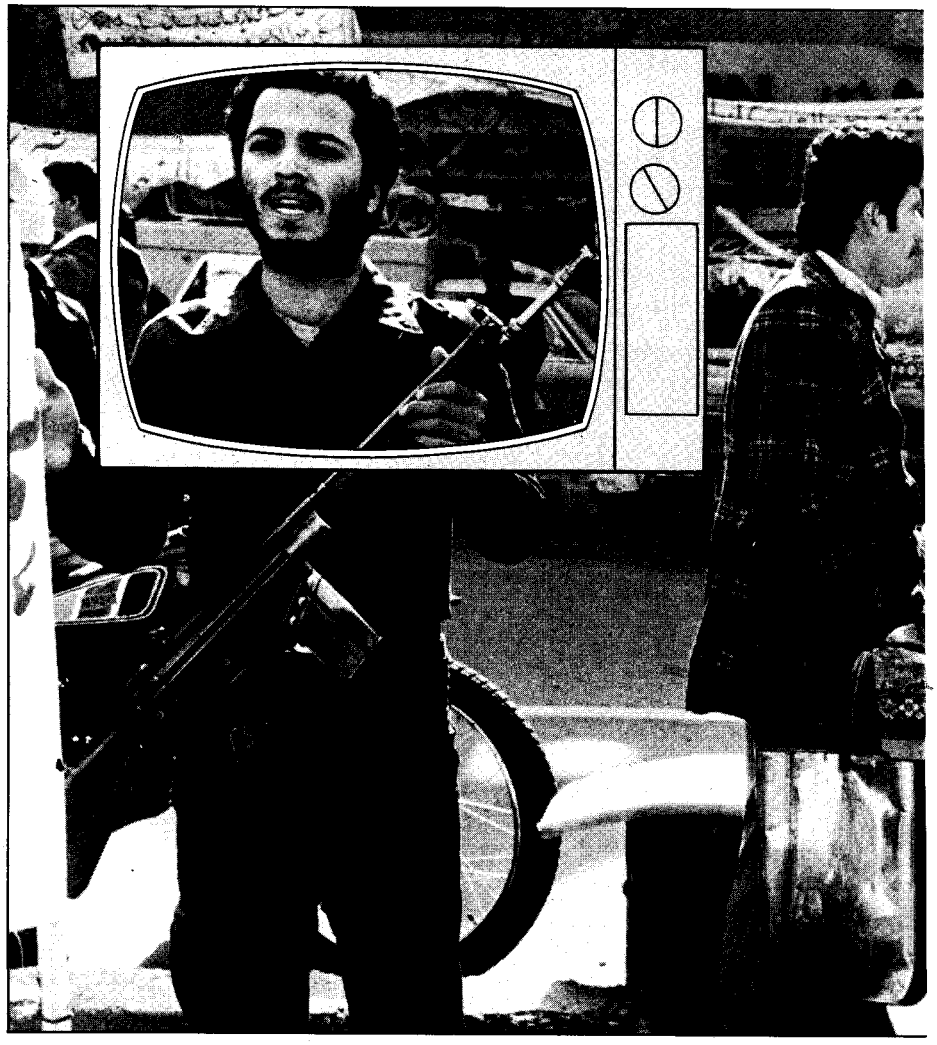
History, other writers have noted, is what observers and historians choose to record. In centuries past, if no one wrote about an event—or passed on an oral tradition (of questionable reliability)—the event might just as well never have happened.

But in the age of video, it seems impossible that significant world events will ever escape objective preservation, since TV pictures never lie. Or do they? The taking of pictures, of course, is as subjective a process as selecting words: Which shots should you take, and which should you skip? The photographer, the moment he aims his camera, is performing an editorial function.

During the early stages of the hostage crisis in Iran, there were daily demonstrations outside the U.S. embassy building in Teheran. And night after night, American television viewers saw footage of the anti-American protests. The pictures themselves were not distorted, but some reporters who covered the story now believe the image was. Less than two blocks from the embassy, they note, there was business as usual in Teheran. Yet American viewers might have easily imagined that the entire city was in turmoil.

When rioting occurred in Miami early this summer, exactly the opposite seems to have been the case. Several critics have observed that all three networks made a determined effort to avoid televising the full extent of the trouble, perhaps out of fear that such coverage would spark more rioting, or perhaps due to sensitivity about television's mishandling of riots back in the Sixties. In both cases, Teheran and Miami, television's coverage was not so much a window on the world as it was a peephole.

But whatever the extent to which television pictures can by themselves betray a news story, there is far greater danger of distortion when the film and tape images are subjected to the editing process. Editing of TV news material ranges from virtually nil—on live programs such as *Meet the Press,* or *Face the Nation*—to moderate—on the three networks' evening newscasts—to heavy—on "magazine" programs such as *20/20* and *60 Minutes. Sixty Minutes* relies more on the editing process than any other program on television, both in ratio of film shot to film actually used, and in the restructuring of questions and answers so that



During the early days of the hostage crisis in Iran, cameramen could create an inaccurate atmosphere of turmoil just by aiming cameras selectively.

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bits of one comment are strung together with pieces of another. As a consequence, it is probably harder to distinguish objective reality from editing on *60 Minutes* than on any other program.

To illustrate what can happen in the editing room, let us go back to one *60 Minutes* segment, first broadcast on November 12, 1978—a close-up on the Franklin Mint titled "Limited Edition." In the report, co-anchor Morley Safer carried on at length about two fairly simple points. The first was that Franklin Mint collectibles—coins, plates, books, and the like—are not very good financial investments, particularly over a short term. The second point was that Franklin Mint customers are often misled about the first point.

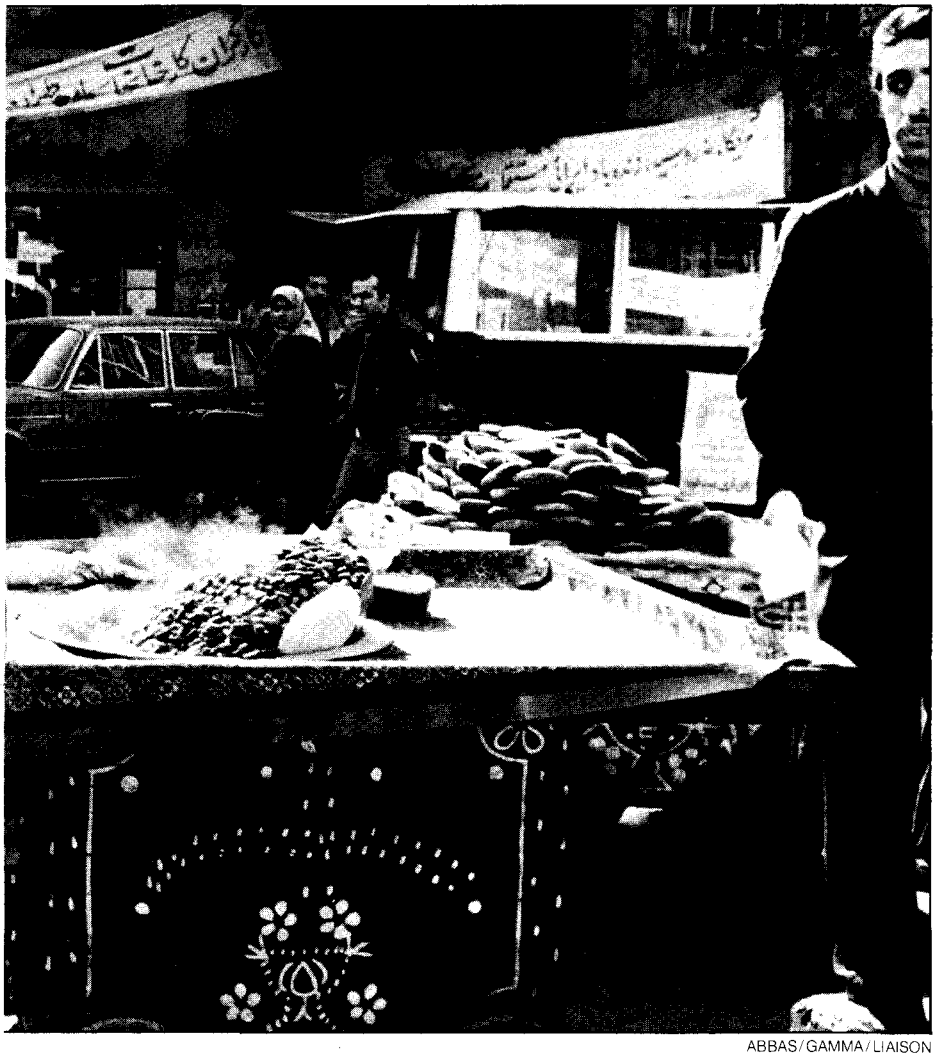
As is often the case with *60 Minutes* segments, there was nothing revelatory here—both of Safer's major contentions had already been explored at length by print reporters. Still, none of the print pieces had so devastating an impact as the segment "Limited Edition." As it happens, Franklin Mint's chairman, Charles L. Andes, thought to have his own staff videotape the entire interview with Safer, thus providing a complete transcript against which the final *60 Minutes* segment can be measured.

One interesting fact that is immediately clear is that the entire interview, when typed single-spaced, runs 20 pages, while the final *60 Minutes* version takes up less than two. When Safer introduced the interview on the air, he said: ". . . we went to Franklin Mint, to their chairman of the board, Charles Andes, to hear their side of the story." That introduction alone might lead viewers to believe that what followed on film actually occurred shortly after Safer walked into Andes's office. In fact, what is shown first in Safer's finished piece actually appears on page 17 of the 20-page transcript.

Here is the final portion of the interview between Safer and Andes, exactly as presented on *60 Minutes*:

SAFER:—The fact is that something like, what, more than 75 percent, to be conservative, of all Franklin Mint issues have decreased massively in price, in value.
ANDES: Yes. Well, now, Morley, you're—you're absolutely right that there is a difference, and I was just going to point out, that there is a—there is a difference between the selling prices which are listed in here [a book] and the prices sold by the dealers—
SAFER: But that—that—that's what we're talking—
ANDES: —and one must realize that if you are going to sell to a dealer in the after-market—Franklin Mint medals or any kind of products in the—to a dealer—that the dealer will, of course, buy it wholesale and sell it retail. But what a collector must do then, if he's not willing to—to—to sell through a dealer, is to sell directly to another collector through ads placed in classified sections of newspapers, or in the numismatic sections of major papers, or in *Coin World* and *Numismatic News.*
SAFER: Well, let me tell you something. We went to *Coin World,* and we have a number of people who went to *Coin World,* and they found that when they advertised their collections in *Coin World,* they were offered roughly—either they were offered nothing or they were offered the spot bullion price for their collections.
ANDES: But that is not necessarily the case in every case. We have many instances where collectors have sold to other collectors, and know of many instances in our—from our monitoring of the market—
SAFER: At above the—at above the issue price?
ANDES: —where—where they sell it—no, not necessarily. In many—in some cases they are sold above issue price. There are a number of products that are sold above issue price.

End of interview. Safer then cut directly to an interview with a Franklin Mint customer and informed the astonished buyer that the Franklin Mint product is often sold back to dealers who in turn "sell it for scrap," and the scrap is "in many cases, or some cases, sold back to Franklin Mint."



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Now let us return to the raw interview between Safer and Andes and edit it differently. By using portions never aired, but without changing any of the quotes by either man, we can create an interview that might just as well have been aired on *60 Minutes*:

SAFER: So far, what would you reckon that Franklin Mint has sold, roughly a billion dollars' worth of collectibles?
ANDES: Yes, that is about the figure, yes.
SAFER: And mainly in precious metals?
ANDES: Not mainly now but I suppose the sum total since the beginning of the company—the majority would be in silver.
SAFER: And even though the price of silver has gone up since you started selling, the price of Franklin Mint material has not gone up with it.
ANDES: No, no. For the most part it is not so. That 62 percent of what the dealers report they sell, they sell above the original issue price.
SAFER: Would you say that investing in Franklin Mint collectibles would be a bad investment?
ANDES: We do not recommend investing in Franklin Mint products as a financial investment and we don't recommend—we don't believe—that people should invest in any kind of collectible or luxury product as a financial investment.

Thus might the interview have ended—perhaps no more fairly than in the actual CBS version, but certainly leaving the viewer with a vastly different impression of Franklin Mint.

The *60 Minutes* library is littered with such examples of the power of television editing. And those who have fallen victim to the *60 Minutes* techniques, regardless of their culpability in whatever is being "disclosed," invariably express surprise at how a recorded TV segment is put together. First, they are unnerved by the film-to-air ratio of about 10-to-one, claiming, in some cases, to have been worn down by the process and lulled into a false sense of security. Then, they are often startled when the interview ends and the camera is turned around to shoot so-called "reverse questions." With the camera aimed at him, the reporter rerecords all of his questions so that they may later be spliced together with the answers. Although all the networks insist that reverse questions match the original questions as closely as possible, there is no denying that the reporter is allowed to polish his performance, while the interview subject's answers must stand as first delivered.

Reverse questions, along with other random shots of the reporter nodding his head or writing in his notebook, are also used to camouflage edits in the final film or tape. Known in the trade as "cutaways," these devices make a segment look smooth and neat while at the same time doing the viewer a serious disservice. When an interview subject begins a sentence, then in the middle of that sentence a cutaway is inserted of the reporter's reaction, followed by what seems to be the remainder of the subject's sentence, chances are it was never one complete sentence in the first place. The sentence was probably patched together from two parts of the interview, with the cutaway covering the break.

"What bothered me most about the interview," says Daniel Schorr, "was the way they set me up."

A producer who has worked on *60 Minutes*—who requested anonymity—says that on more than one occasion he watched Mike Wallace record an interview during which Wallace smiled and encouraged the subject to continue talking, only to insert cutaways in which Wallace has a stern, doubting expression, in effect changing the mood of the piece.

Such ploys can even trip up such broadcast veterans as Daniel Schorr, the former CBS correspondent who now works for the Cable News Network. Back in September 1976, Schorr decided to leak a secret House committee report on the CIA to the *Village Voice* newspaper. While under suspension from his job at CBS, Schorr agreed to tape an interview with Wallace for use on *60 Minutes*.

The full interview runs over 40 pages in double-spaced transcript form, but only a fraction of it actually went on the air. Among the portions *not* aired was Wallace's on-camera opening: "Dan, you have my profound admiration and that of your colleagues here and elsewhere I know, for the eloquent and persuasive case that you made for the protection of a reporter's sources." But the edited version belittled and humiliated the "admired" Schorr.

"What bothered me most about the interview," says Schorr upon reflection, "was not only the editing, but the way they set me up. Because they taped so much more than could have ever been broadcast, they recorded an entire story about reporters' rights before even touching on what they intended to use.

"At one point when I was discussing with [my lawyer] whether I would go on—and he was warning me about what might happen—I said 'I can take care of myself if we do this thing live.' [The executive producer of *60 Minutes* Don] Hewitt talked me out of that. He said, 'No, we never go live because too many things could go wrong. But don't worry.' Well, my answer is that the man with the scissors is the man with ultimate control."

Politicians and other famous figures are increasingly demanding live interviews or none at all. Last spring, for instance, Richard Nixon decided he was ready to talk about his new book. Don Hewitt of *60 Minutes* was quoted as saying he turned down a Nixon interview because Nixon insisted it be done live. According to Hewitt, the editing pencil—or scissors—is one of a journalist's most valuable tools, and should never be surrendered. Barbara Walters of ABC felt differently, however, and agreed to interview Nixon live on *20/20*.

"If you do a recorded interview," she says, "one of the advantages for the reporter is that he always comes out on top; he's always right. You've never seen a *60 Minutes* interview, or any taped interview, in which the reporter gets the worst of it. Doing live interviews has credibility."

Still, it is clear that filmed, taped, or live, the televised image is never more accurate or precise than the cameraman, editor, or reporter allows it to be. The same is true, of course, for the written word. But television's illusion of verifiable reality is so powerful that it is continually necessary to remind oneself that, even with television "news," seeing is not always believing. ■

Peter Funt is the editor of *On Cable* magazine.

PAUL BARTON

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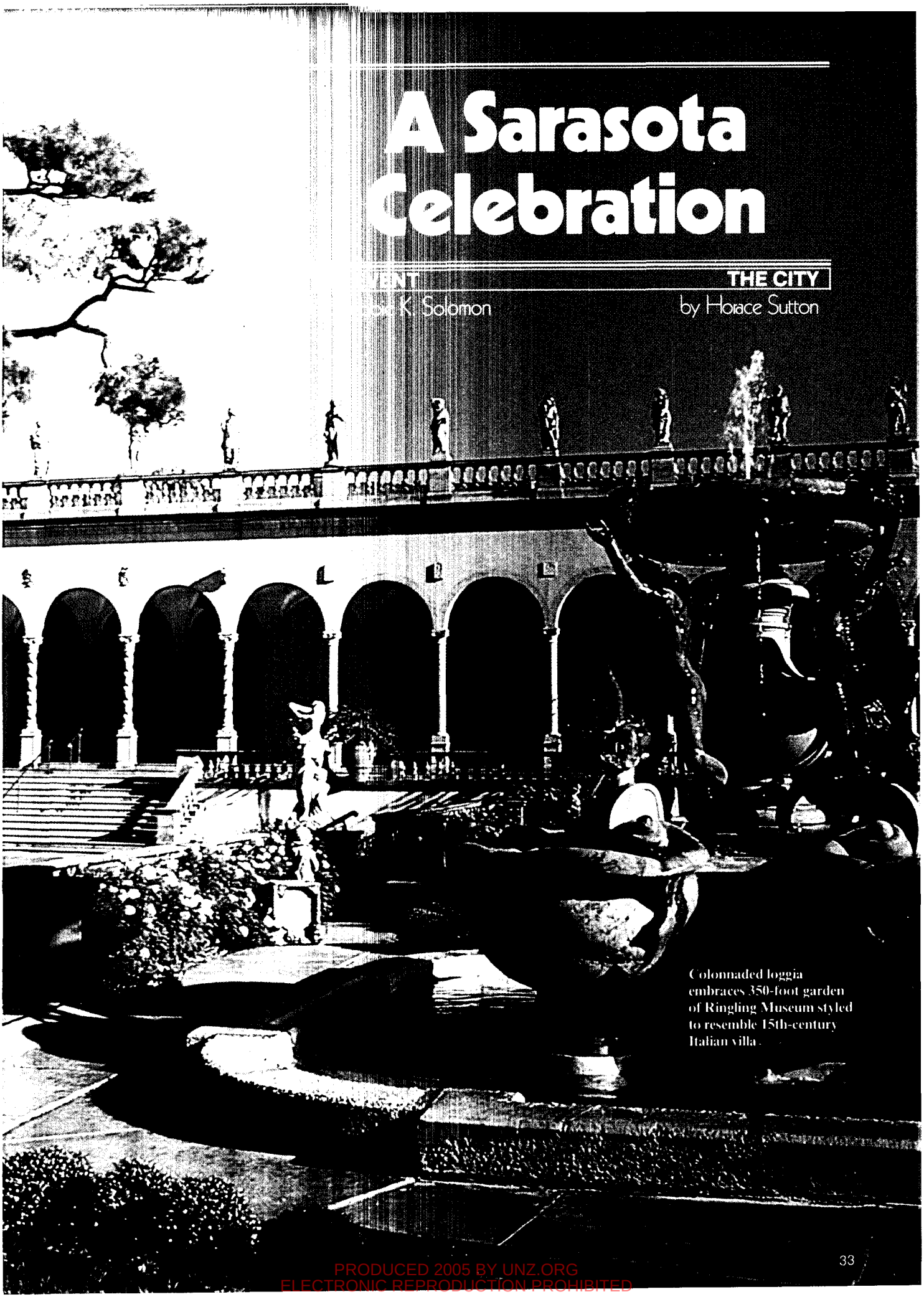
A Sarasota Celebration

THE CITY

by Horace Sutton



Colonnaded loggia embraces 350-foot garden of Ringling Museum styled to resemble 15th-century Italian villa.

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COURTESY RINGLING MUSEUM

"Departure of Lot and His Family," Peter Paul Rubens, in Ringling Museum.

THE EVENT

In the spring of 1926, circus king John Ringling sailed to London in search of fat ladies, midgets, giants, and Siamese twins. He returned home with the fat ladies only—four enormous paintings by Baroque master Peter Paul Rubens. Over the next four years, the man who had staged "The Greatest Show on Earth" acquired 625 paintings and thousands of sculptures, not to mention a 68-acre estate in Sarasota, Florida, and the sprawling Renaissance-style villa he built there to house his art collection.

The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, which was left to the state of Florida upon Ringling's death in 1936, turns 50 this year. To celebrate the museum's golden anniversary, the Ringling has organized a two-ring act: the unveiling of a long-lost Rubens cartoon last month and an exhibition of 17th-century Dutch portraits, which opens December 4.

Despite its solid collection of European painting, the Ringling has remained largely ignored and, even worse is commonly mistaken for a circus museum. Although most of us remember the John Ringling who brought freaks like the Dog-Faced Boy and the Human Eel to towns nationwide, few are familiar with the eccentric collector who bathed in a marble bathtub, slept beneath a headboard crowned with two gilded angels, and surrounded himself with the most extravagant, sumptuous finds his millions could buy.

In the late 1920s, when scholars considered Baroque painting nothing more than a corruption of Renaissance art, Ringling snapped up works by Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velazquez whose drama and pathos would not be appreciated for years. Making a clean sweep of the continent, he picked up a Gainsborough here, a Reynolds there, a handful of Tintorettos and Veroneses. He purchased hundreds of oils by lesser-known Italian and Flemish painters as routinely as most of us purchase items from supermarkets.

To visit the Ringling Museum is to understand instantly that private collections are inevitably the product of one man's whims and taste. In Ringling's case, taste is transparent: He was irresistibly drawn to rococo. Chandeliers with crystals the size of oranges hang in the galleries. Painted panels of Arcadia, where the skies are always blue and the grass always green, adorn one room; it does not seem to matter much that the artist is unknown and the quality of the work negligible. There are antique columns of every size and description, and gold galore—gold tables, gold madonnas, gold reliquaries, enough to put King Tut to shame.

John Ringling didn't think big; he thought tremendous—"the Greatest on Earth." In 1930, it was reported that he owned more square feet of Rubens than any other private collector in the United States, all of it now on public display.

It seems appropriate, then, that for its 50th anniversary the museum unveiled yet another Rubens cartoon that belongs to the same series—"The Triumph of the Eucharist"—from which its four other Rubens cartoons originated. The Eucharist series, which represents an allegorical history of the sacrament of the bread and wine, includes 11 cartoons, all of which were studies for tapestries. Until last year, the Ringling knew the whereabouts of only 10 of the 11: Four were in its collection, two belonged to the Louvre, four had been destroyed by a fire in Brussels. One cartoon, entitled "The Triumph of Divine Love," was missing.

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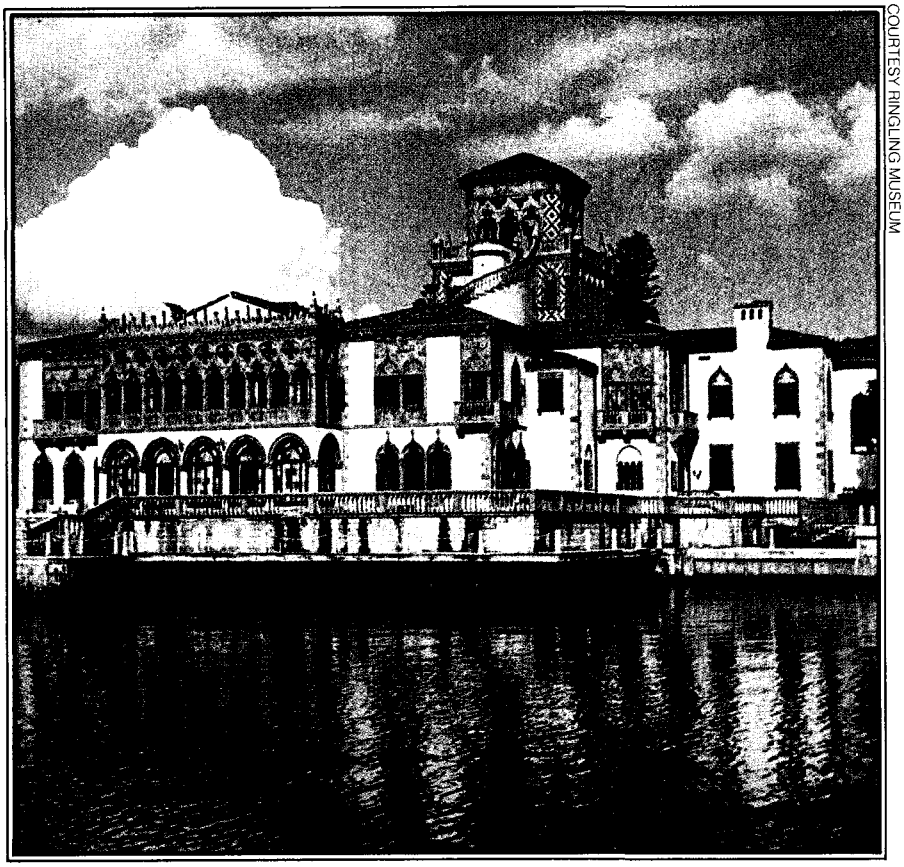

COURTESY RINGLING MUSEUM

The Ringling Home, designed in manner of the Doge's Palace in Venice.

Last fall, William H. Wilson, the Ringling's curator of collections, spotted an advertisement by a London dealer for the lost cartoon. It had last been seen in 1844 in an obscure private collection in England. The large size of the Rubens cartoon—13 feet by 16 feet—precluded sale of the cumbersome work to most collectors and enabled the Ringling to purchase it for an undisclosed but supposedly reasonable price. The work is now on permanent display in the museum's Rubens gallery, making the Ringling's Rubens collection the largest in the country.

And next month, the centerpiece of the anniversary celebration arrives: the exhibition titled *Dutch Seventeenth Century Portraiture: The Golden Age.* "I wanted to pull hundreds of Dutch artists out from the shadows of Rembrandt," says Wilson, who spent three years researching and assembling the show and wrote the accompanying catalogue. Sixty paintings by Rembrandt (of course), his assistants Flinck, Bol, and de Gelder, and other lesser-known artists will be included to prove there's more to Dutch art than Rembrandt's "Night Watch."

Although portraits were as common in the 17th century as photographs are today, we tend to think that Dutch portraiture was limited to painting. Not true. Forty decorative objects bearing images of children and clowns, poets and priests, will be included as well. "People want to see paintings—at least they think they do," says Wilson, but he argues that miniature portraits engraved on, say, silver or crystal, hold as much fascination as a large canvas.

The show includes works never shown in the United States, drawn from the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and 37 other museums and private collections. It will be on view, through February 8, 1981. The museum's directors hope it will broaden the reputation of an institution that has long remained in the shadow of its flamboyant founder.

In conjunction with the Dutch art exhibit, the Ringling is sponsoring a Dutch film festival in the nearby

PAUL BARTON

Ringling Museum of the Circus was built by Florida as a memorial and museum.

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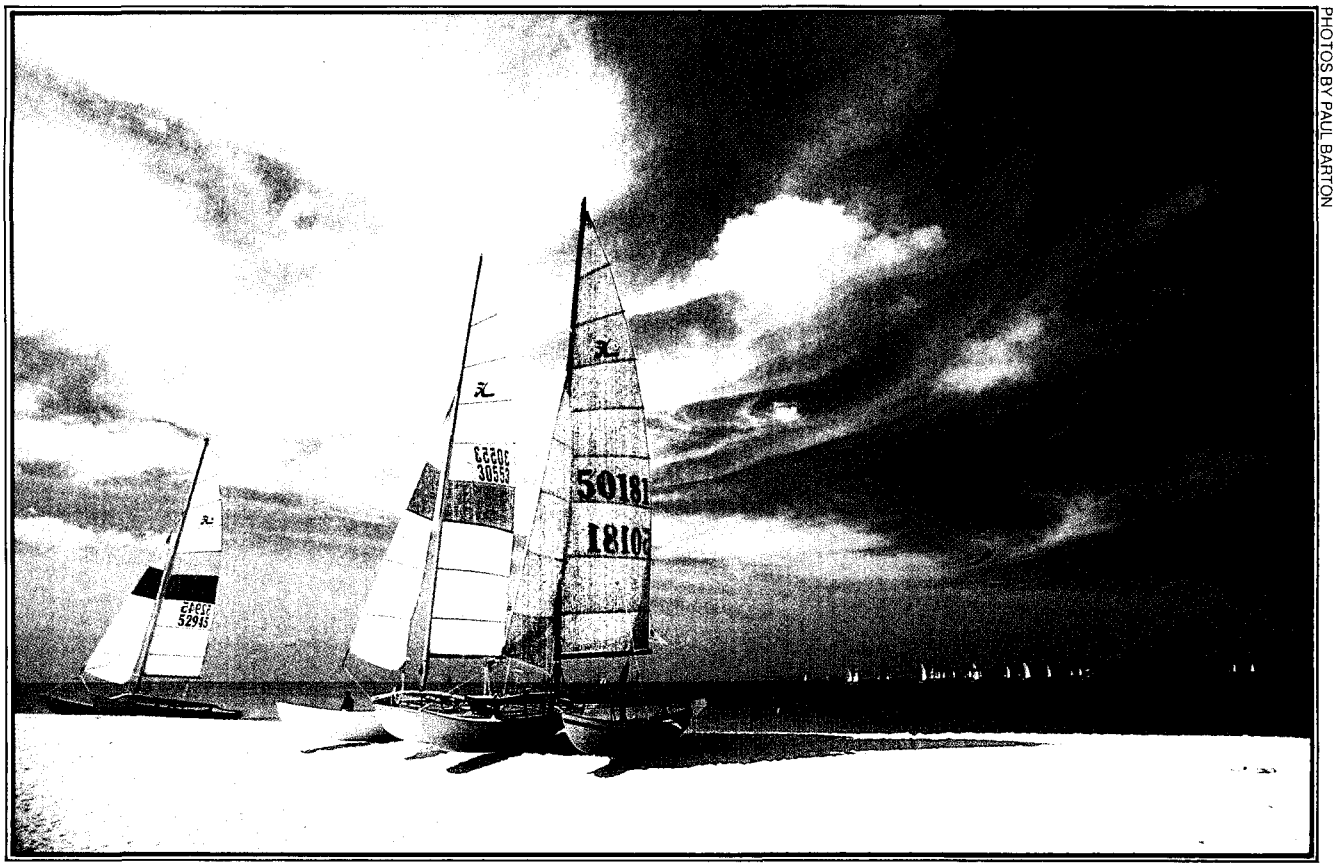

PHOTOS BY PAUL BARTON

Sugar-white sands of barrier keys, washed by the Gulf of Mexico, are a stunning resortland handy to artsy Sarasota.

Asolo Theater (November 11 to 14, 18 to 12; December 9 to 12 and 15 to 19), a recital by the Royal Netherlands Mendelssohn Trio (December 5), and lectures by Charles T. Scribner 3d on Rubens and by S.H. Levie, Director General of the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam, on the restoration of Rembrandt's "Night Watch."

"Everyone has heard of Mellon's bequest to the National Gallery. They know of Frick and Getty. Why is it that no one knows of Ringling's bequest?" asks museum director Richard Carrol. The Ringling's celebration, he hopes, will bring its collection into the art world's center ring once and for all.

Debbie K. Solomon is a Miami-based freelance writer.

Wood carver works to restore gaudy parade wagons in Ringling Museum of the Circus.

THE CITY

As fancy might have willed it, he could as easily have fetched up in Bradenton or Venice, or any one of the dozen towns that dozed along Florida's west coast, washed by the Gulf of Mexico. And if he had they would be different places today. But, in 1909, John Ringling, at 43, master showman, impresario of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the self-styled "Greatest Show on Earth," traveled south to Sarasota to be the house guest of a friend. In this somnolent, sun-seared fishing village that sometimes came alive on Saturday nights when the cowboys wandered in from upcountry cattle ranches, Ringling saw limitless possibilities—all in real estate.

There was the great bay and beyond, a whole archipelago of keys, each of them edged by sugar-white, powdery sand. Herons stalked the brackish backwaters. Gulls flew sorties over the pristine beach. Pelicans patrolled the shallows, dive bombing for a shore dinner. And when the sun went down it dropped like a fireball

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into the sea, in the direction of Mexico 1,000 miles across the gulf.

Ringling was to own several houses in Sarasota, as he began to snap up real estate, but in 1925 he and his wife Mable, once of Moons, Ohio, built a 200-foot-long palazzo, something that would remind them of Venice for which they had developed a special fondness. What emerged is a 30-room phantasmagoria vaguely patterned after the Doge's Palace, surmounted by a 60-foot tower like the one atop New York's old Madison Square Garden, which Ringling also owned.

It was a time when American barons—Hearsts, Vanderbilts, Astors, and Goulds—were stripping the treasures of Europe and planting them in their own derivative palaces in Newport, Asheville, San Simeon, and—of all places—Sarasota. The Ringlings called their mansion, with its enormous bayside terrace enclosed by terra-cotta balustrades, Ca' d'Zan—in Venetian dialect, the House of John. It remains today a *Wunderhaus* of which Ludwig II would not have been ashamed. Flemish and English tapestries hang from the walls, hiding the pipes of an Aeolian organ that would suit a modest-sized cathedral. From the piazzetta, John and Mable could stroll to the dock to board their gondola, imported from Venice, for outings on the bay.

But the Ringlings had bigger dreams. The whole boatloads of artistic treasure that they sent home from Europe would form the nucleus of a great museum to be built near their house. This year, the Ringling Museum, with new acquisitions and considerable fanfare, is celebrating its half-century as the centerpiece of culture in the flatlands of pleasure-bent Florida.

Even as he created the museum, John ordered a causeway built to the keys, and it was done. He owned Bird Key, where his sister lived and where he dreamed of planting a winter White House. He created St. Armand's Key, now a circle of 100 shops and restaurants, and imported a Czechoslovakian band to play in the central mall. He owned vast tracts on Longboat Key, now a prime playland for Sarasota, and began the structure for a fashionable hotel, an edition of the Ritz-Carlton, a name that sang, then as now, with hyphenated elegance. Finally, to hype his real estate holdings, Ringling moved the winter quarters of his Greatest Show on Earth from Bridgeport, Connecticut, to a Sarasota tract provided tax-free by the town.

And so Sarasota became a municipal dichotomy. It was the circus city of America and at the same time a cultural center of note. Both entities are fused together in the 60-acre preserve of the Ringling Museums off Tamiami Trail, the highway that cuts across the Florida peninsula. Here is John's house, John and Mable's museum, the splendid 18th-century Asolo Theater imported by the state in the Fifties, and the Ringling Museum of the Circus that will enthrall the browser with its circus posters of Evetta, the only Lady Clown, and Miss Picture, the Human Picture Gallery, whose body was covered with tattoos. On the tanbark rest two of the largest circus wagons extant, embossed with carved and gilded wild animals.

John and Mable could board their gondola, imported from Venice, for outings on the bay.

Here is the silver cannon from whose barrel the Zacchini brothers were lofted into a net across the arena.

But circus and Sarasota never quite got along. To the so-called "petticoat painters" and others of refinement attracted as much by the cultural winds (generated by the Ringlings) as they were by the weather, circus people were gypsies, and the roustabouts of the labor force imported by Ringling's circus sometimes committed social improprieties frowned upon by the citizenry and the law.

In 1960, the circus moved its winter quarters south to Venice, and Sarasota really began to burgeon as a wealthy retreat with a patina of culture that gave it a different shading from other tropical nests. Looking across the bay today from the terrace of Ca' d'Zan, the white towers of the condominiums on Longboat Key rise like some elongated Oz, scrubbed, clean, unreal, but inviting. They rise, too, on Siesta Key, traditionally the home of writers and artists, which has been able to retain some of its palmetto-and-pine rurality. Yet even here, the choice beach locations, still controlled by the county, are fringed with high-rise palaces. A typical one, called Our House at the Beach, a saccharine name for a sophisticated clutch of towers, will rent the itinerant vacationer a two-bedroom, two-bath, kitchen-equipped apartment for $400 a week. A pair of tennis courts and a pool go with Our House, but there are public courts, too, as well as a jogging trail that weaves through the woods, and, on Crescent Beach, an assortment of volleyball nets, chinning bars, picnic tables shaded by boughs of sea grape, and the combers that come rolling ashore in a timeless pattern of splash, roar, and foam.

Without keeping house the wayfarer can put up in style in the 10-story tower of the Sarasota Hyatt which, located on the Boulevard of the Arts, is handy to the cultural complex and yet is on the water. It has a quartet of lighted Har-Tru tennis courts, a pool, and a pair of restaurants, one of which, the Boat House, is set on stilts in a sheltered marina fashioned from the bay. A covey of rentable Grand Banks trawlers and another of 30- to 50-foot Morgan sailing yachts tie up here. The trawlers can be chartered for $175 a day or $525 for a four-day package. The sailboats can be hired bare-boat or with a captain, and they are often taken for a six-hour sail to Captiva with the mariners staying aboard or at the South Seas Plantation. For the frenetic visitor, down from other climes and seeking surcease, it has become a favored outing to wind down with a five-mile per hour sail on the bay, heading at sunset for the Buccaneer Inn at Sleepy Lagoon Yacht Harbor near the north end of Longboat Key.

Buccaneer provides a Yachtsmen's Clubhouse where sailors can shower, read, or do their laundry. There is berth space for 50 boats and dry-land lodging in 25 rooms, all facing the pool. Tennis on the four lighted courts is free, and the fishing for flounder, trout, and redfish, as well as sport fishing for snook, is as handy as the nearest skiff.

A venerable restaurant with walls of certificates, Buccaneer lists its prices in doubloons and pieces of eight; dishes up hearty, charcoal-broiled beef; serves a late supper menu; and has lately installed a dance floor. In the same purlieus, two French chefs who labored at Chez François in Washington have opened L'Auberge du Bon Vivant, a restaurant redolent of back-country Gaul. A turn off from Gulf of Mexico Drive, the principal artery on Long-

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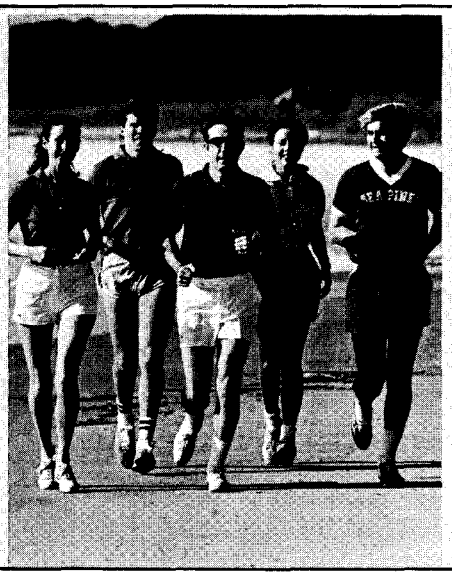

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boat Key, at the Union Oil Station at Broadway will lead to Moore's, once a modest fish house on the bayou. Expanded now, and staffed by a resident porpoise that performs for those who wait for tables, it is renowned for stone crabs (fall to spring), stuffed crab, snapper, grouper, and $7.95 lobsters served with hush puppies.

Farther down on Longboat's long string of condominiums and resorts, Far Horizons is now under French ownership, flies the tricolor, and posts its signs in two languages. All of its 61 villas have been redone (as has its tariff sheet: $116 in winter), the manager is Georges V-trained, the tennis courts are all-weather and all-night, and the clientele in some seasons can be heavily European. This winter there will be Friday-night dinner dances.

The old Colony Club Beach has gone tennis-daft. It has 21 courts spread among its 235 suites, all of which are privately owned and rented to racquet swingers at $110 a day for one bedroom, $200 for two. The transformation from beach resort to tennis club was engineered by an orthodontist who emigrated from frosted Buffalo.

Virtually all of Sarasota's resorts, which include assorted Sheratons, Holiday Inns, and Hiltons, have entertainment in season. But beyond that there is a steady run of top-flight performances at the Van Wezel Auditorium, handy to the Hyatt, which was designed by the Taliesin group, tinted purple, topped with a white dome that looks like a crenellated cream puff, and is locally known as the Purple People Seater. The lovely little three-tiered Asolo Theater, which once reposed in the town northwest of Venice, opens its repertory season in February.

It would warm John's heart to know that the circus still lives in Sarasota. Stebbing Royal European Circus makes its winter headquarters here, many circus acts live here between road trips, and high schoolers continue to give their own circus each year. The human cannonball Zacchinis are here building carny rides in a machine shop. And whether one is buying a doughnut (Ringling Bakery), having a watch repaired (Ringling Jewelers), having a shoe fixed (Ringling Shoe Repair), watching a football game (Ringling Redskins), or riding out to those sandy keys (via the Ringling Causeway), that musical name continues to tinkle in this town. For all that it has become, Sarasota is the city that John built. ■

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CREATORS ON CREATING

Woody Allen

by Robert F. Moss

One of the most prominent names in American comedy for over 20 years, Woody Allen began selling gags to professional comics when he was a teenager, and he later worked as a staff writer for Sid Caesar. After making a successful transition to stand-up comedy himself, he turned to filmmaking. Between 1968 and 1976, he co-wrote, directed, and starred in Take the Money and Run, Bananas, Sleeper, *and several other hit comedies. In the Academy Award-winning* Annie Hall *(1977),* Manhattan *(1979), and his current film,* Stardust Memories, *he deepened his comedy with drama, and in* Interiors *(1978), he abandoned humor altogether and created a Bergmanesque essay in gloom. Away from the camera, he has also demonstrated a literary bent, publishing three collections of humorous essays and short stories. Born 44 years ago in Flatbush, New York, he now resides in Manhattan amid the health-food addicts, street people, psychiatrists, literary mavens, pseudo-intellectuals, and random neurotics whom he has satirized so often in his films. He lives in a duplex penthouse on Fifth Avenue and produces his films from an office on West 57th Street.*

Q *You've been characterized as a workaholic. Is this accurate?*

A If people saw the way I lived, they'd realize that I spend a huge amount of time just relaxing and goofing off, watching baseball on television, going to movies, taking walks, playing jazz, and practicing my clarinet. I don't work around the clock at all. How productive is my output? A film every year at most, probably even a little longer than that, and occasional magazine pieces and that's really it. It's not all that much work.

If you work only three to five hours a day, you become quite productive. It's the steadiness of it that counts. Getting to the typewriter every day is what makes for productivity.

Q *You don't try to create anything in a single burst of inspiration then?*

A No. For me, it was a bad habit to do it that way. When I was much younger the impulse was always to finish the thing immediately. It was very hard to put it aside and come back to it the next day. You become very obsessed with it. I just learned that that was a bad habit. You know, I like to get up pretty early in the morning and work and then put it aside and come back to it the next day.

Q *Do you have any eccentricities that spark your creative powers?*

A I prefer to write on a bed, more than anyplace else. I also can't stand any noise. I read that Tennessee Williams could turn on music—Bach, Vivaldi, or whatever—and still write. I couldn't do that in a million years.

Q *Does your work go through a lot of drafts?*

A I'm a compulsive rewriter. I usually do a half-dozen drafts. When I've shot a film and I'm working on it in the editing room, then I work the other way. I don't do a rough first cut of the film. I work very, very slowly and very meticulously so that the first cut is quite close to the film that comes out. I could almost show my first cut to an audience. When I used to edit with Ralph Rosenblum, his impulse always was to get a first draft of a film up on the screen and then fine-tune it from that point. But I could never do that.

Q *Rosenblum has remarked that you're extremely disciplined about your work, that you'll almost punish yourself by cutting good material if it doesn't contribute to the characterizations and the story line.*

A It's not so punishing; it's really a matter of survival. You look at that stuff with an audience and no matter how superbly you've conceived and executed the material, it may not work. They just sit dutifully through it and wait for the film to go on. Taking material like that out is a mercy killing.

Q *You test your films with an audience very carefully?*

A Certainly with comedy, your relationship with your audience is very close, very vivid. You can tell when you're dying and so you take things out.

Q *Do you find that your essays are harder to do than your films?*

A No, much easier. I don't have to face the sort of pressure that Benchley did or Russell Baker or other journalists who write on a regular basis and have to be funny all the time. If I don't have a funny idea for a magazine article, I just don't write anything.

But with a film, it's not really written beforehand. It's written during the filming. Let's say I decide I want to do a scene in a pet shop. All I need is a note that, say, Diane Keaton and I meet in a pet shop. I don't need the dialogue at that point. Then we find the pet shop and decide how we're going to shoot it.

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Then the whole scene is written there. Not just improvised but actually written there. The tone and atmosphere is determined, the amount of noise—everything. By contrast, the text of a play bears a very direct relationship to what you see on the stage. If you look at a film script and the movie itself, the movie is often nothing like the script. If you gave this pet shop scene to me and to Bergman and Fellini, it would come out totally different. It would be like three different movies. So writing for film is not exactly writing. You're just sort of making notes and you're constantly anxious about what it's actually going to be like and where is the thing going to be shot. You can't actually write it until you know about the location and what actress is going to play in it and so forth.

Q *What about the remarkable wit in your films? You don't just improvise that. Do the funny lines come to you at the typewriter or on the set?*

A Both. Sometimes I'll get a good run on dialogue when I'm writing, and other times not. Sometimes I'll just think of one joke and I'll try and set it up in the film. For example, I did a scene in *Annie Hall* with Paul Simon. We improvised and I just said to Paul: Try to get to the word "mellow" eventually because I have a joke I want to tell.

Q *Do you get different creative rewards from your different artistic endeavors—writing essays, making movies, playing the clarinet?*

A I'm glad I don't have to try and make a living playing the clarinet. I'd starve to death. As for the personal satisfactions that you mention, I think that when you're writing literary things the fun has to be in the writing of them because there's very little feedback on them. I'm never around when anyone reads them after all.

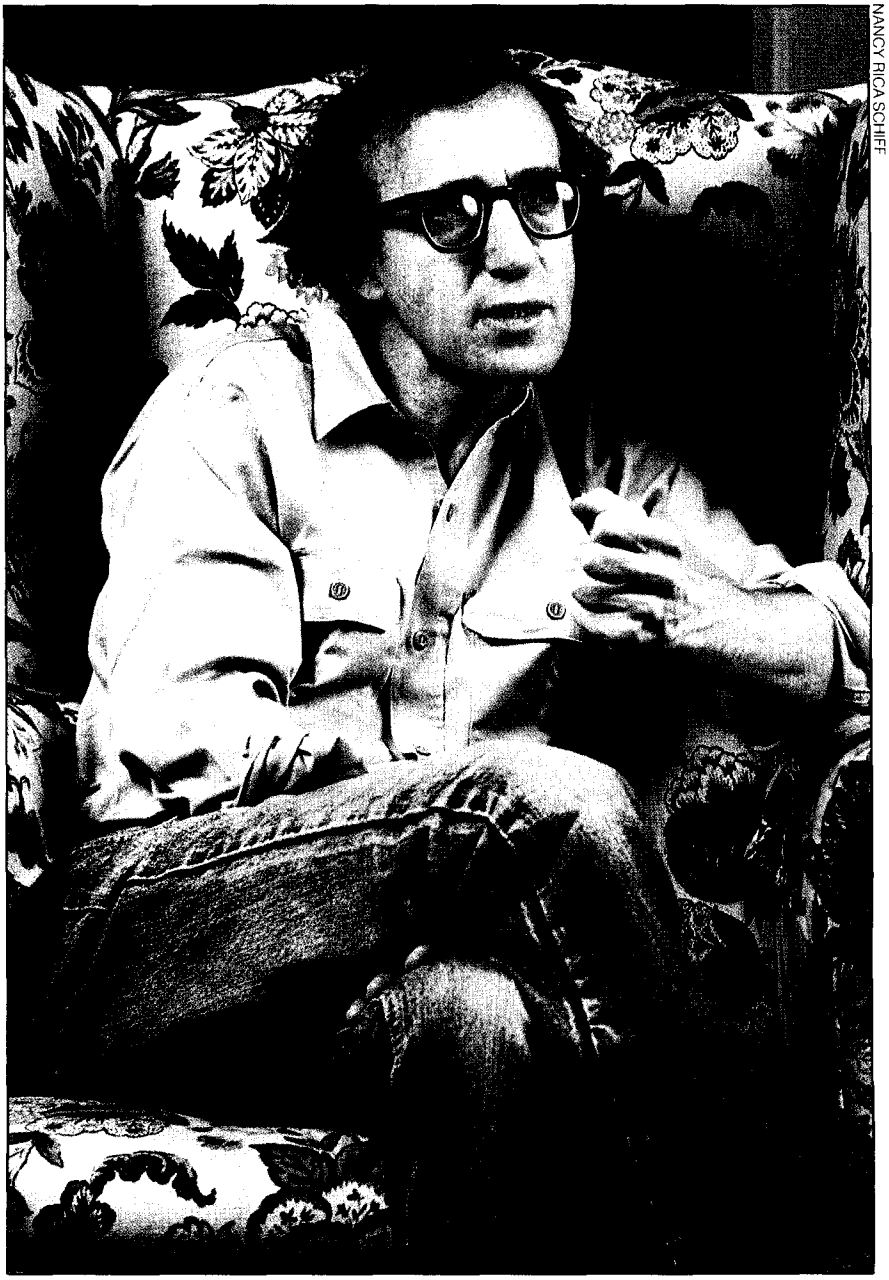
But with a play or a movie you can actually hear the audience laughing. It's a more vivid response. You're constantly meeting people who've seen it. It's a lot less fun to make a movie than to write a story, because the undertaking is too fraught with peril and anxiety and hard work.

Q *And at the end of a day's shooting you can have three minutes of film.*

A Three minutes is a lot for a day's work. You accumulate the movie in little smears, little bits and pieces, which you store in canisters in your office. Say, I started shooting in April; now it's Christmas and I still haven't seen anything. I have no idea whether the thing is coherent or not. It's just a dot here, a dot there—not in any order. The first rush of depression comes when you put your first cut together and you realize how different the picture is from what you conceived. It's such a shock. There are all sorts of complex things that you just can't know until you step back from the camera. My own solution to that has always been to budget another three or four weeks of shooting to go back and fix things.

Q *Have your working habits changed since your early films?*

A Not too much. The only thing is that as you learn more, you become more and more obsessive. I just finished a film that's meticulously wrought, with months of pre-production, and I actually turned the cameras for 31 weeks; that's a long time. I work much, much harder at filmmaking today. I'm much more involved with sets, costumes, photography, all aspects of the picture.



NANCY RICA SCHIFF

Q *You're not really a "movie brat."*

A Not at all. To this day, I can't thread a Movieola or splice two pieces of film

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together. I have no interest in movies from that point of view. But regardless of the limited technical background you start with, you quickly begin to make distinctions between good and bad lighting, good photography and bad, sophisticated and unsophisticated editing. For instance, if I were filming a conversation with you and when I cut to you, maybe you're a bit on the blue side; then next time we see you you're a little bit on the yellow side. That wouldn't bother me in the old days as long as I got a laugh. Today we would make sure that you're lit perfectly. If what we had wasn't just right, we'd call back the actors and actresses, from Europe, if necessary, and reshoot.

Q *Do you show your work to anybody before it's finished?*

A Never prose. No one's ever seen any of those pieces before I sent them out. Films, yes. I always show a draft to people, usually supportive, loved ones, so that even if it's a disaster they won't go out in the street and tell anyone about it. I'm referring to close friends like Diane Keaton. They give me constructive criticism.

Then I show it to an audience of maybe a hundred people. The best thing to do is just listen in the back. You assess people's reactions very well that way. They're going to laugh or be fidgety or attentive, and you can tell. You can sense when the thing is dying.

Q *How autobiographical are your films?*

A My films are only autobiographical in the large, overall sense. The details are invented, regardless of whether you're talking about *Annie Hall*, *Interiors*, or *Manhattan*. For example, I never had a friend who was married and having an affair, then broke it off, and finally went back to the mistress when I was dating her. I never had an affair with a 16-year-old girl. My father didn't work in bumper cars in Coney Island. I didn't grow up in Coney Island but in Flatbush. I didn't meet Diane Keaton that way and she didn't leave and go with a rock singer.

I think people will regard *Stardust Memories* as very autobiographical because it's about a filmmaker/comedian who's reached a point in his life where he just doesn't find anything amusing anymore and so he's overcome with depression. This is not me, but it will be perceived as me.

Q *Do you worry about the sources of your inspiration drying up?*

A Not at all. Quite the opposite in fact. I worry about not having enough time to develop the ideas that I have. I wish I could press a button and have a film come out because I have ideas for six or seven movies in the future. I just can't do them fast enough.

What's difficult is when you're ready to make the film, you've got to choose one of those ideas and sustain your interest in it for a year. It's a funny thing, but as soon as you've committed yourself to one of the ideas, the others seem better.

Just before Marshall Brickman and I wrote *Annie Hall*, we had decided to do a comedy set in Victorian England. We spent two months on it, structuring it to our satisfaction, not writing but working out the shape. We got it all structured, we had our last meeting, and I was going to start writing it the next day. But something came over me, some compulsion that told me we should do a story set in New York, a contemporary story. And we switched, the very day I was supposed to have started the other script.

I do have pretensions. I want to create serious drama, and if I fail I indeed seem pretentious.

Q *Do you feel you achieved the balance of comedy and drama you were after in* Annie Hall *and* Manhattan*?*

A Frankly no. I was disappointed in both pictures because neither turned out the way I wanted it to. It's very hard really because when you're trying to do that kind of work you fall into a trap—Chaplin fell into it certainly. Neil Simon and I were talking once and we agreed that we both succumbed to the same pitfall with our first plays—his *Come Blow Your Horn* and my *Don't Drink the Water*. The pitfall is the temptation to do comedy, then stop and do something serious, then back to the humor, then some more drama. The trick is to truly integrate the comedy and the drama, to intertwine them. I've decided that the only really effective way to mix the two modes is to do drama and interpolate comedy into it.

Q *A lot of people think you've been quite successful, artistically speaking, in your last few films.*

A That's because they don't know what I really had in mind. Also, a guy pays his $5 to get into a movie, and in general most American films just insult his intelligence completely. If he sees anything that's at all thoughtful or sensitive, he's very grateful.

Q *You're one of the few filmmakers in this country who get any sort of authentic sensibility into their work.*

A Well, I think I'm one of the few who are trying. And I have a big struggle because the quality of my stuff is not as high as I want it to be. And to be honest with you, the number of people who come to see my films isn't that great either. I have an audience, a public, but it's just not as large as you might imagine. I'm not saying that my movies don't make money—even *Interiors* showed a slight profit—but I've never had a real blockbuster. I've never had a film that did anything near the business that Mel Brooks's movies do or *Airplane!* or *Animal House*. *Annie Hall* made less money than any other Academy Award-winning film.

Q *How do you react to criticism?*

A I read most of the reviews of my work with great interest. I'm very grateful to the media because I've almost always gotten a good press and it's helped my career enormously. I can't really say I learn from notices in any artistic sense because they don't affect my work. They do, however, affect the size of the audience that goes to see my work, so I look at them with the hope they'll be mostly favorable.

Q *There have been at least two major attacks on your work, one by John Simon in the* New York Times *and the other by Joan Didion in the* New York Review of Books. *How do you respond to critical broadsides like these two?*

A When a critic really doesn't like my work, I feel I've let him or her down.

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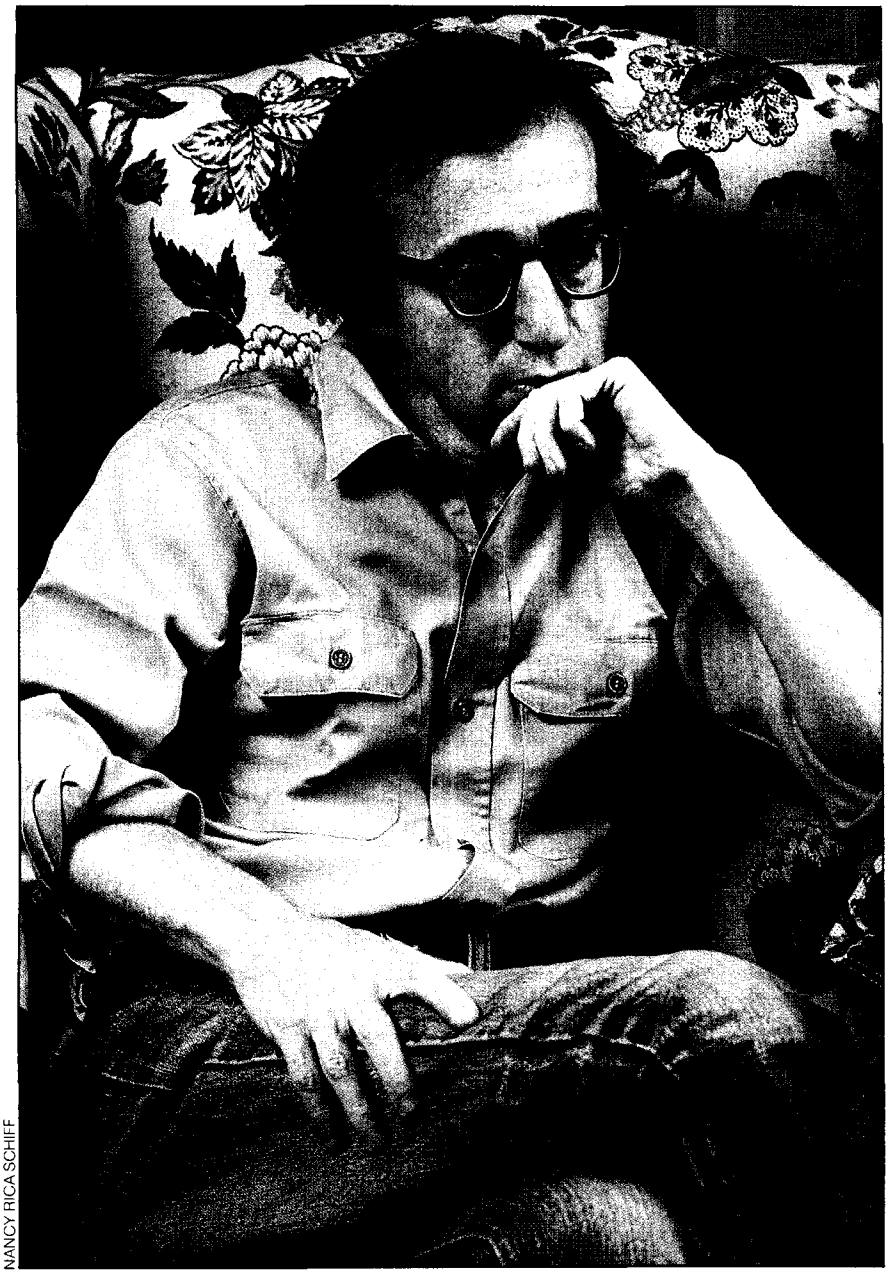
That's my honest feeling. I believe that the burden of entertaining people is on me, and whether it's a professional critic or a guy off the street who comes into the theater, I want him to like my movies. Sometimes a cab driver will tell me he didn't like my most recent movie, and I have the same disappointment.



NANCY RICA SCHIFF

Q *The commonest criticism is that sometimes you're pretentious.*

A I think that's correct in that I do have pretensions, I do want to create serious drama, and if I fail at that I would indeed seem pretentious. But I believe I have to try at all times to reach the highest possible level that I can, whether I'm doing comedy or drama.

Q Interiors *was the only one of your films that was generally not well received. Do you feel that the film was a mistake?*

A I don't think it was a mistake to make it. I think it was very important that I make it, that I face that kind of creative challenge. Still, I have to agree with the critics that the movie was a failure. I set myself an enormous task and I was just not up to it, at least not at that time. If I made the film again now, I'd do a lot of things differently and I feel it would be a better movie.

Q *Many people say they have noticed the influence of Bergman on* Interiors. *Were you consciously attempting to model your film on his work?*

A I was consciously trying to avoid it. But it was not easy—because he's my favorite filmmaker and obviously the subject matter lends itself to a Bergmanesque treatment. I wanted to make a serious drama about human relationships with no jokes at all, no comedy. I picked the hardest sort of movie to do.

Q *Your most recent films concentrate on the neuroses of a small, affluent, well-educated class of people in Manhattan. Do you feel this work suffers at all from parochialism?*

A On the contrary, I think it's quite universal. It must be because people identify with my characters and situations throughout the world. My last three movies have made more money in Europe than in the United States. If I were parochial, I don't see how people in Rio, Buenos Aires, and Vienna could respond to my films, but they do. You could make the same charge about, say, Tennessee Williams: He only writes about sick people in the South. Or you could attack Chekhov because his characters are all indolent do-nothings, procrastinating and complaining.

Q *Do you see yourself as a distinctly Jewish filmmaker?*

A Not really. I draw my ideas from everything I've done and everything that interests me. It's only one element. It seems to me that certain subjects, like Jewishness, are unusually vivid; they have a disproportionate resonance. You can have 600 jokes in your film and if two of the gags are Jewish, the picture will be perceived as a Jewish comedy. This is a false perception, I think.

Q *Do you have any long-range creative goals?*

A You mean like playing *Hamlet* someday? I don't think I ever want to do that. My goals are general rather than specific. I want to continue to grow and develop as a filmmaker and keep my hand in where theater is concerned as well. As a serious artist, I feel that I have a long way to go, but I thrive on creative challenges. I like to stretch myself. I want to make better movies than I have, with the hope that someday I might create a film that I'm totally satisfied with myself. ■

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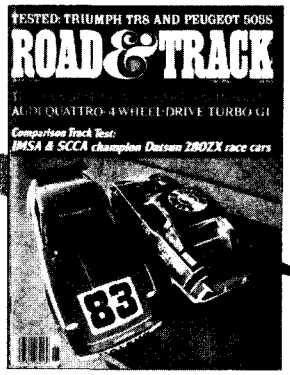
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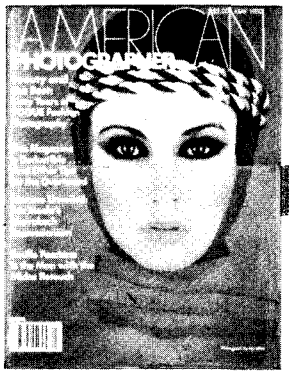

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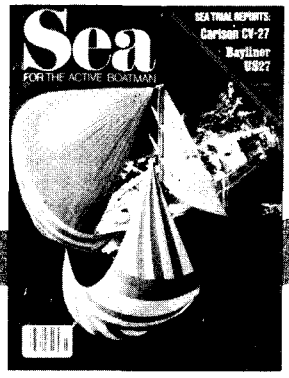

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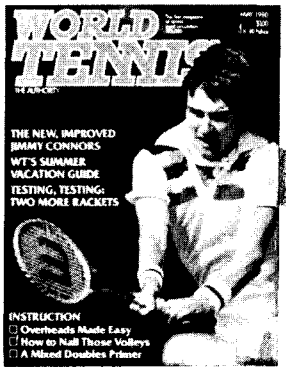

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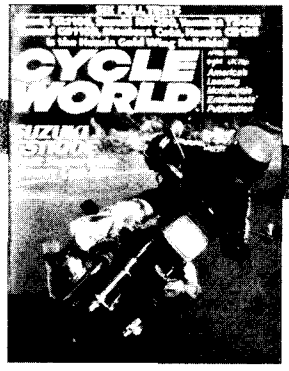

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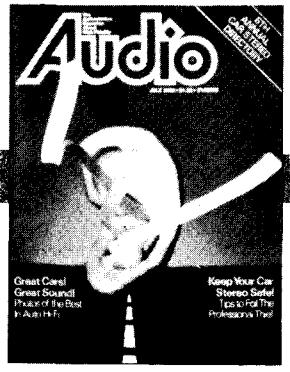

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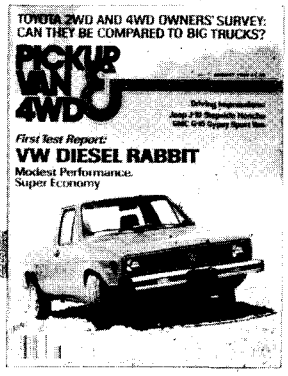
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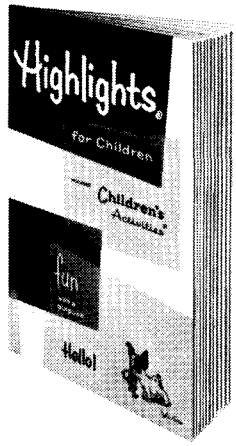

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The Rise of the Housewife Novelist

by Ross Wetzsteon

If enough people have the same fantasy, sooner or later someone will turn it into junk mail. So there it was, in the mailboxes of hundreds of thousands of American housewives, "A special invitation to join some of the richest, brightest, and most beloved women in history . . . and save a good $6 while you're at it . . . . I cordially invite *you* to join Pearl Buck, Shana Alexander, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Gloria Steinem, Erma Bombeck, Joyce Carol Oates, and thousands of other women who have commanded the attention and respect of the world as writers. To encourage you to explore your potential in this wondrously fulfilling field, I am enclosing a special subscription form . . . ."

Impressed by such shrewd marketing —you can have dreams and save dollars at the same time—I called the publication to find out what else they had available by way of invitations to Parnassus. Within hours I held in my hands a slim yellow volume, its jacket picturing two suburban kids, a bowl of mashed potatoes, a pot of boiling water, and an unlaced sneaker, all surrounding a blissful woman typing away at her manuscript. The book's direct, forceful, no-nonsense title: *How to Be a Successful Housewife/Writer.*

The Housewife/Writer. The image this calls to mind, of course, is a woman in curlers—surrounded by toddlers clutching at her knees, unwashed dishes in the sink, unmade beds, week-old shopping lists, and overflowing ashtrays—staring wistfully at her typewriter, daydreaming of Southern plantations, Caribbean revolutions, or pirate ships ("as his rough mouth crushed against her lips, she desperately tried to resist, but when his hot tongue forced its way . . . ").

But another image comes to mind as well—a woman in curlers, surrounded by those toddlers and unmade beds, yet staring with determination at her typewriter, resolved that housework is not her final destiny, convinced she has abilities homemaking can never utilize, and, above all, knowing that in order to fulfill her life she must be more than a wife to her husband, a mother to her children; she must also become a person to herself.

***Ordinary People*'s Judith Guest and the family she tends.**

The truth, as is usually the case, lies at both extremes. But Elaine Fantle Shimberg's *How to Be a Successful Housewife / Writer* is a compendium of useful advice Virginia Woolf somehow overlooked. "One way I've tried to create more personal time for me," Shimberg writes, for example, "is by making better use of my 'dummy time,' repetitious work that requires little thought on my part and can be combined with another task such as: folding laundry while watching the news on television . . . thinking of titles or lead paragraphs while doing dishes or running the vacuum, wiping off counters or dressers in the radius of the phone cord while talking on the phone." One wonders if she wrote that paragraph while getting the ring out of the collar.

"Are you willing to tell your husband you want to drop out of the couples' bowling team?" —there's one Jane Austen didn't have to worry about. "Don't worry about cleaning the house for friends. [Just] make sure there's toilet paper in the bathroom, a clean bar of soap, and fresh towels"—and join Gloria Steinem!

It's tempting to go on quoting for pages (I can't resist adding "How to Keep Hubby Happy and Helpful: Ask for his help in arranging a schedule that works for you without making him feel threatened in any way"). But to make jokes about housewife / writers is ultimately to overlook the emptiness and pathos of the constricted lives from which so many of them are attempting to escape. For in spite of the relentless cheer of Shimberg's prose, the vision of the housewife that finally comes through is that of a woman whose life is nothing but an extension of the lives of others. Implicit in her book is a sense of the

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housewife as not only utterly helpless (she needs to be told how to do the most simple things to ease the homemaking burden), but as unutterably guilty (she also needs to be constantly reassured it's all right to do them).

Time and time again, Shimberg glimpses the dissatisfaction in the lives of many housewives, their desire to do more meaningful work of their own ("By achieving some level of success as a writer," she says, "you no longer take your sense of accomplishment from those won by your children and husband"), but she quickly backs away from the implications of her own statements. Why shouldn't hubby, for instance, make some changes in *his* schedule? For all her assertions to the contrary, it's clear that the housewife/writer's work is something she must fit into her primary responsibilities, not the other way around.

Fortunately, Shimberg also includes a series of interviews with successful housewife/writers such as Peg Bracken, Marjorie Holmes, Bette Greene, Phillis Reynolds Naylor, Lois Duncan, Evelyn Wilde Mayerson, Shirley L. Radl, Ann Toland Serb, Aleen Malcolm, Pat Leimbach, Barbara Deane, Marion Bond West, Bea Bourgeois, Teresa Bloomingdale, Terry Tucker Francis, Erma Bombeck, and Billie Sue Mosiman, and here the tone is less bylines-and-babies-do-mix cheerfulness than the wry, self-deprecating humor traditionally associated with the oppressed. "If you spend too much time being a housewife/writer/mother when you have a husband," Peg Bracken writes, "you'll end up without one . . . . On the other hand, writing can be more interesting and more fun than a husband."

Two themes emerge over and over again: the difficulty of finding time to work, and the nagging feeling of unworthiness. Marjorie Holmes writes, "There were thousands of times when I thought I would go mad, mad, mad with the interruptions, the frustrations." Bea Bourgeois (the mother of 10 children): "I haven't had five undisturbed minutes in the last twenty years." Pat Leimbach: "There is a maximum potential of five free hours in a housewife/writer/mother's day—they lie between midnight and five a.m."

Still, as more and more women nationwide are embracing—or at least feeling pressured to embrace—careers after motherhood, it seems as reasonable to become a wife/mother/novelist as a wife/mother/real estate agent or a wife/mother/management trainee. And of course, the more women there are braving artistic challenges, the more enriched the literary world could become. In fact, after a few false starts, there are signs that the enrichment may already have begun.

Though not always intended as such, the novels of housewife/writers can often be read as statements about their own search for independence.

Often, the double life of housewife/writers leads us back to lurid romantic fantasies of the Southern plantation, the Caribbean revolution, the pirate ship with its hot tongues—or, as in the case of Marilyn Durham's *The Man Who Loved Cat Dancing*, Wyoming in the 1880s. A housewife with two children in Evansville, Indiana, Mrs. Durham was one of the earliest housewife/writers—according to the jacket of her book, published in 1972, "Mrs. Durham had never attempted a novel until, one day, she sat down and began writing . . . ." It isn't clear whether or not she made the beds that fateful day, but something in her soul must have longed to break loose, for her novel tells the story of Catherine Crocker's flight from her sniveling husband, her capture by a gang of grungy desperadoes, and her Raquel Welch-ish adventures in the Western badlands, from train robbery to wilderness flight to bloody shootouts.

Now Catherine is a woman of considerable spunk (and Mrs. Durham is a writer of considerable narrative skill), and in one sense her story is that of a wife who "turned into a human being instead of a doll." But how did this transformation take place? It seems there's something about the eyes of the gang leader—and in the end her story is less the discovery of a sense of self than the discovery of the right man. By novel's end, this tough, defiant woman—by now even a victim of rape—is saying to a man: "I'm trying to tell you how much I'm pleased to have you scowling at me and ordering me about again, that's all."

" 'Shut up,' he muttered.

" 'Shut me up.'

"He did, kissing her dry lips, and her closed eyes . . . ."

At last she's found Mr. Right.

But while the pirate-ship syndrome continues to this day, it's much more interesting to look at the novels of housewife/writers who have broken free of its "shut me up" swoons. For a number of housewife/writers have not only found the time to write (and the courage to leave the sheets unchanged), but have discovered a provocative theme in their very predicament itself. Though often not intended as such, their novels can be read as statements about their own search for independence—and, in some cases, almost as feminist fables.

In this regard, Judith Guest's over-the-transom *Ordinary People* (1976) is a significant transitional novel—its subject, far from the escapist daydreams associated with housewife/writers is "the typical American family" itself. Its attitude toward suburban values is critical rather than reverential, and her portrait of a housewife is devastatingly unsympathetic.

A Minnesota housewife with three children, Guest didn't begin writing until she was 32—or rather, as she puts it, "I'd written for a long time, but not for anybody's pleasure but my own. I was writing in a closet. I finally realized it's one thing to love a paragraph, but something else to finish a piece of writing—I never really finished anything until I was 32." When she was first married, Guest taught public school, but stopped when her first child was born and didn't return until 10 years later when her youngest child finally went off to school.

As a novel, *Ordinary People* suffers from frequent attacks of flatulent wisdom ("*Not fair not fair!* no, but life is not fair always, or sane, or good, or anything. It just *is.*"), and some of its attempts to render feelings should be

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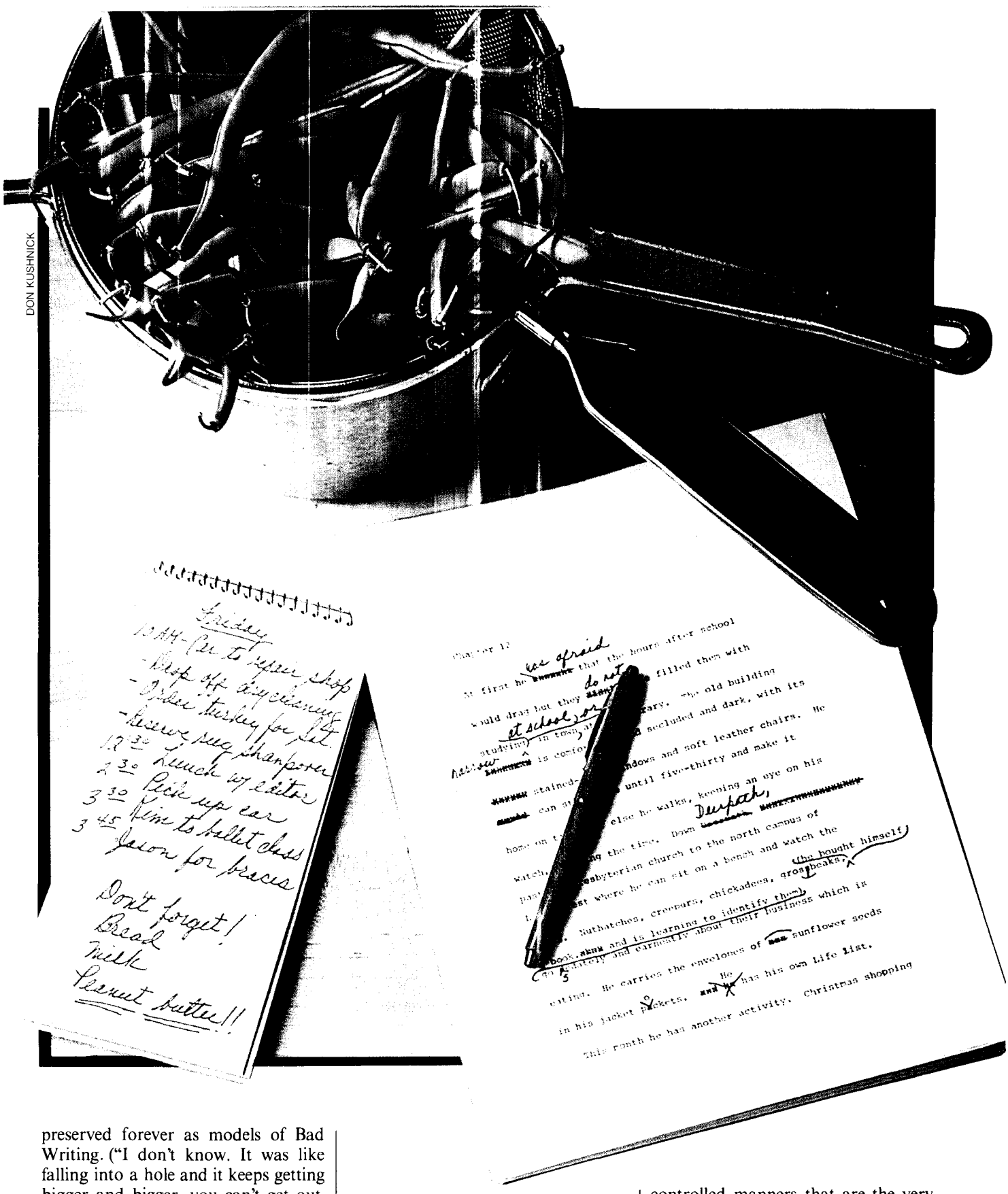

DON KUSHNICK

preserved forever as models of Bad Writing. ("I don't know. It was like falling into a hole and it keeps getting bigger and bigger, you can't get out. And then all of a sudden it's inside you, it *is* you, and you're trapped, and it's all over.") But the novel's power derives from Guest's mastery of two antithetical tones—the claustrophobic, tense, confined feelings of the family, contrasted to the warm, relaxed, yet sharply penetrating humor of the wife's psychiatrist. What's most interesting, however, is Guest's subversive attitude toward suburban lifestyles—the real villains of her novel are those suppressants of feeling, the polite facades, the safe orderliness, the rigidly controlled manners that are the very essence of housewifely values. Her novel might well have been titled "Unmade Beds."

Joyce Rebeta-Burditt's *The Cracker Factory* deals even more directly with the predicament of the housewife. A quasi-autobiographical first novel by a

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woman with three children, it relates the efforts of Cassie Barrett (a quasi-anagram?), a housewife/alcoholic, to overcome the traumatic self-doubts of a woman confined in a domesticity that leaves her with no sense of identity whatsoever. "I put one foot in front of the other and marched through my days, wondering why I felt as though red-hot barbed wire was shredding up my stomach." "What he wants," she tells her psychiatrist about her husband, "is a housekeeper. Someone to clean up the messes and see to the details while he does the important things. . . . I thought marriage was sharing and growing together. How can I share with someone I never see?" After taking all this in, her own mother pronounces the words every housewife has heard: "You have everything a woman could want."

Finally, with the help of her psychiatrist, Alcoholics Anonymous, and a savage, irrepressible sense of humor—but mostly with the help of her own determination—Cassie achieves the self-respect that is the goal of so many housewife/writer novels. "You need [your husband's] stability," her psychiatrist has told her, to which she is at last able to respond: "I WANT MY OWN STABILITY."

Jean Auel's recently published *The Clan of the Cave Bear*—for which she received a $130,000 advance and a $220,000 paperback sale—is an interesting hybrid. On one level, it can be read as just another housewife/writer "take me away from all this" escapist fantasy (it deals with a Neanderthal tribe on the northern shores of the Black Sea some 35,000 years ago, and, among other things, contains an incredible amount of fascinating detail about the daily life of primitive men and women, from hunting to cooking to medicine to clothing to sex to religion). But on another level, it can be read as the story of the first feminist. Ayla, a Cro-Magnon girl orphaned by an earthquake at the age of five, is adopted by the Neanderthal clan despite her "otherness." Slightly more mentally advanced than the Neanderthals, she has difficulty "learning to curb her natural curiosity and impetuous enthusiasm to conform to the customary docility of females." For this is a sexist society that would make a Turkish harem look like the offices of *Ms.* magazine. "Both men and women accepted their roles without struggle; they were inflexibly unable to assume any other. They would no more try to change their relationship than they would try to grow an extra arm or change the shape of their brain." Submissive at first, Ayla eventually rebels—she won't accept sexist rituals, she violates every taboo, she even dares to hunt.

Auel has violated a number of taboos herself. "Four days before my 25th birthday I had my fifth child," she says. "I began to feel trapped by all those children. Where is my life going? There must be something else to life than staying home and taking care of the kids. But that's the way we were raised—after marriage, there is no rest of your life. I wouldn't settle for the same old ending."

The Clan of the Cave Bear ends with Ayla, forced by the clan to abandon her child, leaving the cave to pursue her individual destiny. "The last thing Ayla heard as she disappeared behind the broken ridge was [her son's] plaintive wail—'Maama, Maaama, Maamaaa!'" Would it be too much to see in this ending the story of the housewife/writer?—not literally abandoning her children, for like most housewife/writers Auel's are now grown, but realizing at last that her life has a goal in *addition* to motherhood, that she can finally walk out of the cave to meet her future?

As the housewife/writers in Shimberg's book attest, their most difficult problem is simply finding the time to write. So what could be more appropriate than to end with a novel about a woman who had to keep putting aside the novel she was always beginning to write? Nina Schneider's *The Woman Who Lived in a Prologue* chronicles the long life of a modern woman of independent spirit. "I'm eager to discover my own life, whatever that is," heroine Ariadne Arkady writes. "I have survived the unrelenting authority of family needs, the petulant tyranny of domesticity, the sensual abnegations of matrimony, the prodigal cruelty of offspring, the aberrant gratifications of adultery, the whimsical expectations of those tombstone angels, my grandchildren; the entire womanly life for which I was promised I would pass into the land of the self-possessed adult. And I tell you, I have been lied to. Under the guise of privilege I have been robbed of a life I could call my own. My training is useless, my education out of date. I am irrelevant, expendable, obsolete, yet I'm burdened with a hungry something . . . ."

That "hungry something"—starved by the constrictions of a family-centered existence—finally finds sustenance in the writing of a book about those very constrictions, the ultimate, and easily the best, of the housewife novels. Again like Shimberg's housewife/writers, Ariadne Arkady is often overwhelmed with self-doubt: "A couple of children are no lifetime occupation anymore. Say you give nine years to raising two of them to school age. A life expectancy of eighty or more leaves you half a century to feel obsolete. I had four children in the days when homemaking was *the* honorable profession, yet at thirty-five I felt as relevant as a middle-aged Buick; too old to be useful, not old enough to be a classic." But Nina Schneider is too attuned to the difficulties and ambiguities and *pain* of her character's choices to fall for Shimberg's sun-stroked optimism: "To the very end, life seems to force on women a morality of abnegation; a giving up of the personal, whether of sensuality, or ease, or creative fulfillment. There are no sanctified cop-outs. A child's cry of need has the power to recall a woman from her deepest sleep, her most vivid dreams, to her specific domestic responsibility."

"To the very end"? Not really. For in the end, this superb first novel was finally completed. Nina Schneider is 67 years old. ■

"At 35, I felt as relevant as a middle-aged Buick: too old to be useful, not old enough to be a classic."

Ross Wetzsteon is a senior editor at *The Village Voice* and a frequent observer of the literary scene.

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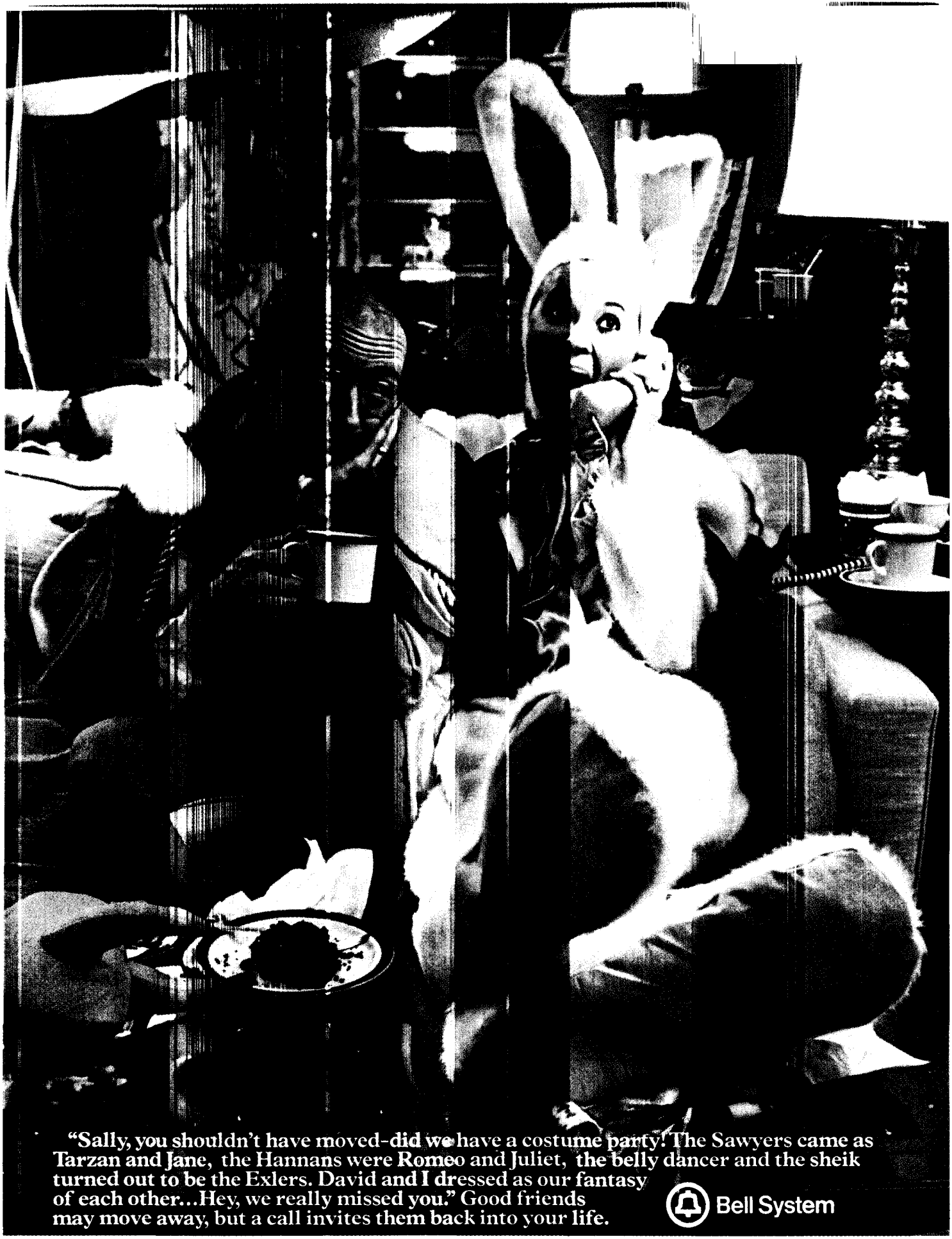

"Sally, you shouldn't have moved-did we have a costume party! The Sawyers came as Tarzan and Jane, the Hannans were Romeo and Juliet, the belly dancer and the sheik turned out to be the Exlers. David and I dressed as our fantasy of each other...Hey, we really missed you." Good friends may move away, but a call invites them back into your life.

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ments in the Rabbit Diesel for 1981.

But for all of those, the most impressive thing about it is the one thing we didn't change.

And that's its fuel economy.

The Rabbit Diesel still gets better mileage than every other car in the country.

In fact, the four-speed Rabbit Diesel gets even better mileage than it did last year.

For the four-speed, EPA estimated 42 mpg, 56 mpg highway estimate. (Use "estimated mpg" for comparison to other cars. Mpg varies with speed, trip length and weather. Actual highway mpg will probably be less.)

If you're thinking about a diesel, you really should look at this one.

There isn't another diesel on the road that comes close to it.

But then, we started with a big advantage when we built the 1981 Rabbit Diesel.

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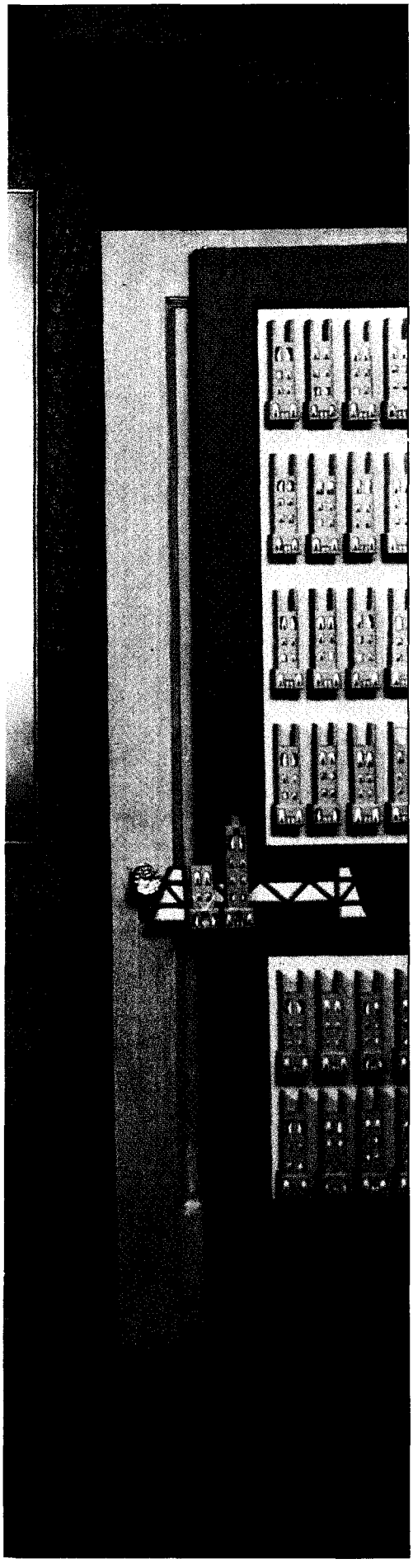
The Bergmans' Treasures

by Vicki Goldberg

Edwin and Lindy Bergman live in the middle of their delights: art, art, and more art. "About 30 years ago," Ed Bergman says, "we began to feel we were being intellectually lazy, so we took a liberal education course at the University of Chicago. Somehow contemporary art kept coming up, and we began to go to the Art Institute a lot. Later we devoured *Masters of Modern Art,* a book published by the Museum of Modern Art, and we went to the museum whenever we were in New York. We educated ourselves. Then once in the early Fifties I came back from a business trip" (Bergman is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of U.S. Reduction Co., a division of American Can Co.) "with a picture as a present." "That was it," says Lindy Bergman. "We realized we could own a work of art."

It must have been a stunning realization. Today, in their living room alone are a collage, a painting, and a sculpture by Miró, four works by Ernst, a Dubuffet, a Brauner, a Magritte,



Left: The Bergmans in front of paintings by Jim Nutt (left) and Ed Paschke, a door by Roger Brown, and a small Robert Arneson sculpture. Below: (counterclockwise from top left) a picture by Victor Brauner, a sculpture by Germaine Richier, two Cornell boxes, a Miró box, and a De Kooning sculpture.

PHOTOS BY ALEXAS URBA

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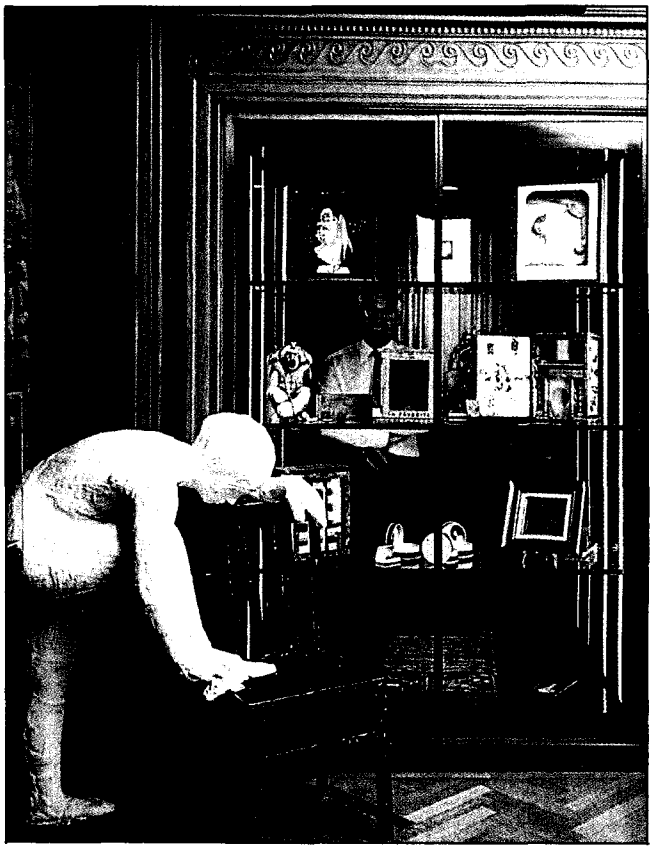

Top: a Magritte painting, two Cornell boxes, and a Wilfredo Lam dish. Below left: a Max Ernst painting above (left to right) a Miró sculpture, a Cornell box, sculptures by Germaine Richier and Max Ernst, with a fireplace screen by Frank Lloyd Wright. Below right: a George Segal figure beside a two-sided display case filled with Cornell boxes. (Ed Bergman is on the other side of the display case.)

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three Nevelsons, a Matta, a Tchelitchew drawing, a Gorky drawing, a DeKooning sculpture, a small Masson, an Arp, a fat girl by Botero hanging in the space left by Picasso's portrait of Dora Maar (which was lent to the Museum of Modern Art show), some Mexican sculpture, and box upon box by Joseph Cornell, some of them in a glass cabinet that replaces part of the wall between living room and dining room and lets visitors see the front and back of each box.

The Bergmans had no professional advice but were certain of their tastes. Almost everything they bought has maintained its enchantment for them. Enchantment and magical transformation lie at the heart of their collection. Almost from the beginning they bought the Surrealists, who were not so popular then but available in Chicago galleries, and they went on to buy works that still had a shiver of Surrealism about them. The Bergmans own a number of pieces by Ernst, Miró, Matta, Tanguy, Gorky. A Magritte in the dining room: a wild red sun that has popped out of the sky to float in front of a forest. A Delvaux in the bedroom: two naked women running between lamps. They also have a Balthus. two Boteros, several John Grahams, some early Calders. The Bergmans have always followed Chicago artists too, especially the group known as the Hairy Who, that includes Jim Nutt, Ed Paschke, and Karl Wirsum. And then there are the Cornells.

In the mid-Fifties, the Bergmans began buying boxes by Joseph Cornell. Today they own more than 100, including some of the most important in Cornell's development. About 40 from their collection will be in the Cornell show that opens at New York's Museum of Modern Art on November 17. Theirs is undoubtedly the finest privately owned collection of Cornells. "There are some wonderful Cornells in other hands," Ed Bergman says with a smile, "and mind you, I begrudge every one of them."

Joseph Cornell, who died at the age of 69 in 1972, lived most of his life in the same house on Utopia Parkway in Flushing, New York. Usually linked with Surrealism—a movement he never joined—his work was displayed at the Museum of Modern Art as early as 1936. His boxes are like little stages where dream and snippets of memory play out a haunting script. He was the poet of an elusive world, in which ice cubes twinkle in jewelry boxes and pipe-dreams solidify. In the Bergmans' "Sand Fountain," sand, perhaps the sands of time, runs into a broken wineglass. In "Medici Slot Machine," a young Medici prince stares gravely across the ages above playthings made for a child of today. Cornell's pervasive nostalgia could also be leavened by wit. "A Pantry Ballet (for Jacques Offenbach)" lines up red plastic lobsters to dance a charmingly staid quadrille. On the back of another of his boxes is a cockatoo and the inscription: "le déjeuner de Kakatoes."

In 1959, the Bergmans met an artist in Rome who gave them a gift for Cornell and told them that though Cornell didn't want to see people, he couldn't resist a present and therefore would see them. Months later, on a trip to New York, Ed Bergman called Cornell, who said he wasn't up to seeing people that day—until he heard there was a present for him. A friendship was struck immediately. Cornell wrote to say that he could not express what a marvelous day it had been but would tell Ed Bergman about it some day in heaven. Mr. Bergman wrote back to say he appreciated the thought, but there was no rush.

Ed Bergman says they used to visit on a strange level, saying very little but somehow communicating. Cornell, he adds, always regretted having sold a piece and he once decided the Bergmans owned too many good ones and wouldn't speak to them for a while. Bergman walked into a gallery and the dealer said, "Oh, you're Ed Bergman. I'm not supposed to sell to you." But the dealer sold him the piece anyway.

The Bergmans also have the kinds of pieces Cornell seldom made. Mrs. Bergman has two pendants, and they own several books Cornell decorated with irrational creatures on matter-of-fact pages. They still have a warm relationship with Cornell's family. They own a collage by Betty Benton, Cornell's sister, and have a cabinet full of memorabilia, some of it gifts from the family — there are photographs of Cornell, tiny boxes, even the dossier of extensive research Cornell did for their "Penny Arcade for Lauren Bacall."

"We never said it," Ed Bergman recalls, "but we got to a point with the Cornells where we felt, 'This is way beyond us. This is no longer only our amusement and pleasure and love, this is an obligation.'" They wanted to fill in the gaps and kept on collecting, but the project became too expensive. They have long felt that their collection is theirs on a temporary basis, that they themselves would come and go but the works would endure. Their wide-ranging collection will eventually go to museums; they think it important that the Cornells stay together as a group.

"We got to a point where we felt, 'This is no longer only our amusement and pleasure and love—this is an obligation.'"

The collection has a personal flavor and a unity they sense but cannot name. (Mr. Bergman hung Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" beneath two Cornells, only afterward realized that both Cornells contained pipes.) Their apartment, from the foyer to the storage closet full of art to the library shelves lined with Cornell boxes between the art books, is full of mystery, poetry, the cerebral element that is layered over the emotional in Surrealism. Their art concentrates on people, animals, and representation, and they evidently love boxes: They own two by Lucas Samaras, one by Nevelson, one by H.C. Westermann, and 40 feet of Miró silkscreen rolled up in a Miró box. "We're probably very dull to a lot of our friends," says Edwin Bergman with amusement, "because we talk about art so much." "Well," Lindy Bergman puts in quickly, "that's life." ■

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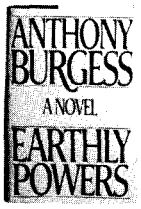
Burgess's Masterpiece

by Paul Theroux



Earthly Powers
by Anthony Burgess
Simon & Schuster
448 pp., $15.95

About 14 years ago, Anthony Burgess, then in England, made several public vows: Sick of paying punitive British taxes, he said he was leaving soon for Malta to get on with the real business of writing; he had published a score of books, but now, practicing silence, exile, and cunning far from Her Majesty's Inspectors of Taxes, he promised a novel of "Tolstoyan proportions."

We waited. Burgess set to work. He composed music and movie scripts; he published translations and learned divagations on the works of Joyce and Rostand; he wrote a critical biography of Hemingway; he reviewed hundreds—perhaps a thousand—books. And he moved from Malta—to Hollywood, onto the American university lecture circuit (one-nighters in Bloomington etc.), to Rome, to Manhattan, and finally to where he presently lives, in Monte Carlo, still stoical among the sybarites. And all this time he published novels: *M.F.*, *The Napoleon Symphony*, *Enderby's End*, *Beard's Roman Women*, *Abba Abba*, *Man of Nazareth*, and last year's *1985*. These are explosive, language-loving works, ringing with cadenzas expressing Mr. Burgess's dissatisfaction with labor unions, literary cliques, the Catholic hierarchy, social hoodlums, corruption, human weakness, greed, moral sneakery, sinister bureaucracy, and a failure of will that has produced cheating art and a kind of cultural arteriosclerosis on a global scale. They are Tolstoyan sentiments, but none of the novels has been of Tolstoyan proportion.

And yet, secretly, Mr. Burgess has been working on just such a novel. It seems almost incredible that while he has been working on the books we know, he could have been—at the same time (but how?)—steadily shaping a major novel that surpasses any of them. It is the novel he promised all those years ago—huge, symmetrical, very funny, and filled with the ideas and obsessions he has hinted at in his other writing. It is about our century and its excesses, well-known people and nonentities, and a dozen countries. It is such a pleasure to see such a grand edifice of intelligence, humor, ambition, and imagination, that it is impossible on reviewing it to appear less than rapturous.

To summarize *Earthly Powers* would be to summarize the history of our century. The narrator, who is also central to the action, is 81. He is Kenneth Marchal Toomey, novelist, short-story writer, and playwright. If I had not already read Ted Morgan's *Maugham* I might have been ignorant enough to assume that Mr. Burgess was poking gentle fun and modeling his hero on the Queen of the Villa Mauresque. In fact, Toomey's homosexuality and stage successes are all he shares with Maugham. Toomey is more popular and better-traveled, and he is hardly as reclusive or crankish. He is completely involved in world events and, though his writing is novelettish and even vulgar, he is literary enough to have held long and subtle conversations with James Joyce and Ford Madox Ford, mocked Norman Douglas, and chinwagged with Rudyard Kipling. Maugham was uninterested in religion; Toomey's concern with theology, particularly the Pelagian Heresy and the spiritual conundrum of his own sexual preference, is something he returns to again and again. And in a piece of virtuoso plotting, Mr. Burgess allows Toomey to have been instrumental in the choosing of a pope—Pope Gregory XVII—back in 1958, the year, in Burgess's view, when things began to go wrong in the Church.

The pope, it turns out, is an old friend of Toomey's, and the careers of both men are chronicled in the novel—Toomey begins as the author of a scandalous novel something like *Sinister Street*; Don Carlo Campanati (the future pope) as a priest with a well-connected family. Toomey's sister Hortense has married Campanati's brother. Campanati's mother also figures in an episode when she tries to prevent the rise of Hitler in Germany. Another Campanati brother is gunned down by Chicago gangsters, and Toomey himself becomes unwittingly implicated in the Third Reich when he delivers a P.G. Wodehouse-type broadcast and is branded a traitor by the British press. Public people are friends and relations: History, Burgess seems to be saying, is very much a family affair.

Toomey's elephantine memoir has, as he quickly points out, an arresting opening: "It was the afternoon of my eighty-first birthday, and I was in bed with my catamite when Ali announced that the archbishop had come to see me." At a stroke we are introduced to all of Toomey's preoccupations—Time, Flesh, and the Church. The place is Malta and soon Toomey is grimacing over a bungled birthday party and the rantings of his foul-mouthed friend; fighting this chaos, he is toppled headlong into the past. But he warns us early that the writer's memory is unreliable:

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How far could I claim a true knowledge of the factuality of my own past, as opposed to an artistic enhancing of it, meaning a crafty falsification? In two ways my memory was not to be trusted: I was an old man, I was a writer. Writers in time transfer the mendacity of their craft to the other areas of their lives. In that trivial area of barroom biographical anecdotage, it is so much easier and so much more gratifying to shape, reorder, impose climax and dénouement, augment here, diminish there, play for applause and laughter, than to recount the bald treadmill facts as they happened. Ernest Hemingway, as I remembered well (but what do I mean by remembering well?), reached a stage where, even though he had virtually ceased to produce fiction, he was totally in thrall to its contrivances. He told me, and he was only in his fifties at the time, some years my junior, that he had slept with the beautiful spy Mata Hari and that she had been "good though a little heavy in the thigh." I knew, and records could confirm, that Hemingway had not even paid his first visit to Europe at the time when Mata Hari was executed.

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Anthony Burgess—Secretly, he has been shaping a novel of Tolstoyan proportions.

That Hemingway reference is Toomey at his most typical, for he has the world at his feet, and all the luminaries he could deal with, from a very early age. His British-French ancestry gives him access, and during his long life he is in all the right places: in London discussing male sexuality with Havelock Ellis and lunching in Paris with Harry and Caresse Crosby. He is slightly contemptuous of James Joyce ("all wordflow") but helps him make a lexical cat's cradle: Joyce asks:

"What do you call an earwig in your part of the world?"

"An earwiggle," I said.

"Eire wiggle," Joyce said in blind smoking joy. "Write it down on this cigarette packet. You err and then you wiggle out of it . . . ."

In Italy, among his adopted family—the Italian connection is strong—Toomey witnesses the rise of the Black Shirts, and soon he is on his way around the world. His first stop is Malaya: Burgess has been here before in the trilogy we know as *The Long Day Wanes,* but he does not repeat himself; indeed, the Malayan episodes of *Earthly Powers* are among the best in the book. Toomey writes a biography of Stamford Raffles and a clutch of short stories, then pushes on to Australia and Hawaii, San Francisco and New York, arriving back in London to observe *The Well of Loneliness* trial ("a bad book"). In disgust he returns to Italy in time for Mussolini's signing of the Lateran Treaty. He sees ecclesiastical controversy looming and makes tracks for Hollywood; here, between filmscripts and conferences, he considers the merits of Pelagianism. Toomey's Hollywood is recognizably hideous, but he is as successful a scriptwriter as a playwright. A few years later he is in Berlin, swapping stories with the Reichsminister, Dr. Goebbels. There are straws in the wind—intimations of anti-Semitism—and Toomey, who has a nose for what the public wants, writes a book about the coming holocaust.

In the meantime, Don Carlo Campanati has risen from priest to monsignor to cardinal. Toomey has been present at several somewhat dubious miracles, and later while he is debating racial questions with a new catamite—an American black—Toomey is unaware that Cardinal Campanati is intriguing at the Vatican. It was Campanati who made the Vatican inviolate by getting Il Duce to sign the Lateran Treaty, and before long—in a succession of events far too complicated to recount here—Campanati is made Pope Gregory XVII. This is very much the present: degenerate modernity, special pleading, cloudy logic, and the tyranny of fuzzy ideas and fatuous scholarship. It is funny, but it is also horrifying, and another tour through America only convinces poor Toomey that the end is nigh. The memoir concludes on that note, Toomey trying to sleep amid rain and thunder: "I hoped there would be no more dreams."

This is too large and well-structured a book not to be deliberate. It asks questions elaborately by illustrating in the most dramatic way the lives of two men determined to prevail. One might say that while Toomey makes a religion of his art, Campanati makes an art of his religion—this is politicking in the broadest sense, unspiritual and sterile. Like two Tamburlaines on the prowl, they seek the glory of an earthly crown, and in their separate ways they fail as men by succeeding in their art. But the novel is much more than the story of two men. It is about the course of literature, politics, popular culture, and religion; it contains fascinating discourses on food and language—it is full of meals and monologues. It is, in all ways, a remarkable book. ■

Author of *The Great Railway Bazaar* and *The Old Patagonian Express*, Paul Theroux has just published a collection of stories called *World's End* (Houghton Mifflin).

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The Essence of Henry James

by Louis Auchincloss

The Letters of Henry James Volume III, 1883–1895
edited by Leon Edel
Harvard University Press
592 pp., $20

Henry James dedicated himself to the profession of literature with a fervor and a loyalty that even that jealous art rarely excites. Not only did he achieve an *oeuvre* massive by the standards of his own prolific era; he read comprehensively in contemporary fiction, drama, poetry, history, and criticism, not merely in his own tongue, but in French, Italian, and German, and he assiduously cultivated the acquaintance of his fellow authors. His intimate friends included Robert Louis Stevenson, William Dean Howells, Paul Bourget, Alphonse Daudet, James Russell Lowell, Edmund Gosse, and Mrs. Humphrey Ward—and his "friends" included almost everyone else: Flaubert, Zola, Browning, Meredith, Turgenev, Edmond de Goncourt ... the list seems endless. Like a busy doctor who is always "on call," James was never far from his books, and he conceived of his active social life and extensive travels as the filling up of a vast storage plant that would supply him with all the ideas, all the *données,* as he called them, that he would ever need.

One might deduce — and some have — from the foregoing the image of a man who sacrificed his humanity to a cause, a kind of fanatical priest or crank. But James had a depth of cultivation and a generosity of heart that saved him from such excesses. As a true professional, he recognized the equal validity of other vocations. He respected soldiers and lawyers and doctors, and even politicians and stockbrokers, and thus avoided the vulgar error of some 20th-century writers who, suffering from a sense of inferiority at the powerlessness of literature in the "real" world, tend to shake their pens like tocsins. On the other hand, his close association with a London society that, for all its frivolity, included the chief administrators of a vast empire, helped him to avoid what he deemed the insularity of the small, closed group of writers in Paris who considered literature—and French literature at that—the only subject worthy of their attention.

The James whom we meet in this third volume of Leon Edel's edition of his correspondence (1883–1895) is a man who tries to see the true proportions of things. He never, contrary to some impressions, locks himself in an ivory tower. Time must be taken out of the busiest day, or even from the most difficult book, to find an apartment, a maid, or a nurse for his invalid sister Alice. (A review of *Alice James: A Biography* appears on page 64.) Scrupulous attention must be given to business matters, for James must earn an income to pay his rent, board, and servants. He was never content to write in a garret; he liked an active role in the world around him. Loans must be made to unfortunate relatives; friends from home must be entertained and shown the sights. Travel plans must be made, and doctors, lawyers, and agents consulted. And, of course, the letters themselves, the rich, dense, packed letters, must be written.

They stand at a midpoint between his life and his literature, part of both. One might even say that they contain the essence of James. He usually wrote them at the end of his working day, reserving his finest efforts for his art. "When I lay down the mercenary pen," he put it to Lowell, "my fingers ache too much to take up the sentimental one." But not too much to fill 592 pages of a volume that contains only a fraction of the letters written in the dozen years covered!

We have become so happily accustomed to following James's life and work under Leon Edel's leadership that it is no surprise to find that his editing is superb. Just enough is told; there is not a footnote too many nor one too few. Edel is like an expert guide on a bird walk — he points, he whispers, and lets his subject hold the scene. That scene is an exciting one, for we see James at the great crisis of his career. He has finally, after much experimenting, settled in London; he has explored its society exhaustively and is able at last to withdraw to write about it objectively; he has, in short, mastered his trade. The great novels of his middle style, *The Bostonians, The Princess Casamassima,* and *The Tragic Muse,* have come before the public. And what has happened? The public won't buy them.

It is the period when James dropped from his point of greatest self-confidence to that of his deepest depression and turned desperately to the theater as a solution, only to be plunged again into darkness. But the drama, in the correspondence, is always muted. The sad story has to be made out behind the calm, ordered unrolling of the daily events of a writer's life: what he is reading and writing, whom he is seeing, and what they talk about.

The letters are filled with vivid portraits. The greatest of Victoria's prime ministers, encountered on a weekend at Lord Rosebery's, fails to impress James: "Gladstone's mind doesn't in-

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terest me much: it appears to have no preferences, to care equally for all subjects." Similarly, at Oxford, sitting up late with the aging liberal statesman John Bright while the latter recounts at length the plot of *Ben Hur,* he notes that "great statesmen may be very measureable creatures." And hear him on Vernon Lee, the British expatriate expert on the Italian 18th century:

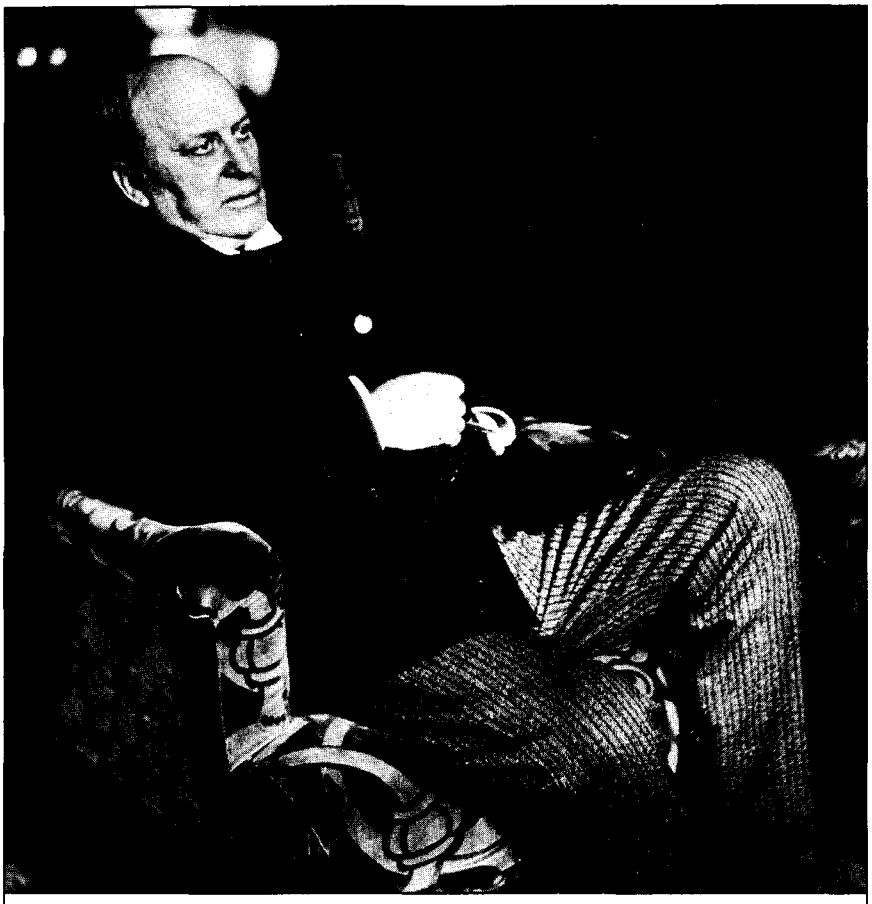
> She is exceedingly ugly, not "well off," disputatious, contradictious and perverse; has a clever, paralysed half-brother, Edward Hamilton, formerly in diplomacy — who is always in her salon, bedridden or rather sofa-ridden — and also a grotesque, deformed, invalidical, *posing* little old mother, and a father in the highest degree unpleasant, mysterious and sinister, who walks *all day*, all over Florence, hates his stepson, and hasn't sat down to table with his family for twenty years.

It is richly comic to watch James's compulsive honesty seep through the interstices of his elaborate good manners in his letters to other writers. With women his gallantry sometimes prevailed. One is a bit sorry to catch him hoping to T.S. Perry that Vernon Lee's "first attempt at a novel . . . may be her last," and writing to Lee herself: "Write another novel, you owe it to yourself." With Mrs. Humphrey Ward's *Robert Elsmere* and with Stevenson's ballads he is much more candid, and he really lets the unfortunate but thick-skinned Bourget have it when he denounces his boudoir pruriencies and gives his typical hero "*un coup de pied dans le derrière.*"

It is helpful, in following James's desperate six-year struggle with actors and managers, to have read enough of his drama to know how bad it is, and to have a sufficient acquaintance with the silver-tongued theater world to know how cruelly it has always kept poor authors dangling with delays and false hopes. That James should have scorned Oscar Wilde, the master of just the kind of airy, sparkling comedy that he himself was trying unsuccessfully to write, is surely one of the ironies of literary history. It is painful to follow James's wild dreams of theatrical glory, but the letters in which he describes the hideous booing of the first night of *Guy Domville* and the final crash of his hopes are dignified and eloquent in the writer's greatest manner. One is deeply moved by James's firm resolve to return, purified so to speak, to the practice of his own art.

Perhaps there are a few too many letters in the volume. Incidents that have to be told to William James are sometimes tedious when repeated in letters to Grace Norton or Stevenson. And one learns to skip James's endless (and absurdly unnecessary) apologies for his own laziness as a correspondent. But the image of James, the writer, as he builds it — part fact and part fiction, like all self-portraits — seems to require the full bulk of this correspondence. It is a noble image, perhaps finer than the truth, and having a peculiar validity of its own. Why, for example, did James never marry? We know all about the early accident in the fire at Newport, about his failure to enlist in the Civil War, and his flight from the dull male world of American business; we know of the homoerotic friendships of the later years. But I still like the ring of free will in the way he puts the matter to Grace Norton:

> At any rate, I shall never marry; I regard that now as an established fact, and on the whole a very respectable one; I am both happy enough and miserable enough, as it is, and don't wish to add to either side of the account. Singleness consorts much better with my whole view of existence (of my own and of that of the human race), my habits, occupations, prospects, tastes, means, situation "in Europe," and absence of desire to have children — fond as I am of the infant race. I give you here the results, simply, of much meditation, but can't narrate the process. But I may say that since definitely and *positively* (from a merely negative state) making up my mind not to marry, I feel that I have advanced in happiness and power to *do* something in the world. ■



BETTMANN ARCHIVE

James wrote dense, rich, packed letters—while the public ignored his novels.

Louis Auchincloss is the author of *The Rector of Justin, Edith Wharton,* and *Reading Henry James,* among other books.

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Henry James's Brilliant Sister

by Judith Rossner

A Biography of Alice James
by Jean Strouse
Houghton Mifflin
384 pp., $15

If it is a basic problem of life that we must surmount the expectations of childhood to function as adults — even though adulthood never turns out to be what we thought it would be — that problem was vastly compounded for the daughter of Henry James, Sr., the younger sister of William and Henry James. "What a washed out, cowering mess humanity seems beside such a creature as that," Alice wrote after her father's death. And how is one to convince the sister of America's greatest psychologist and greatest novelist that the value of a life is simply in the living?

Heretofore I've had no curiosity about the James family that couldn't be satisfied by reading Henry's novels. I came to this book through an interest in Jean Strouse, whose previous work, an anthology called *Women and Analysis,* made a strong case for not throwing out the brilliant baby of Freudian thought along with the bath water of his masculine bias. Ideologues in general, of course, are hostile to the notion of forces outside their conscious control — except Freudian ideologues, who are hostile to the notion of forces within it. Strouse and the other essayists in her volume were demonstrating, often simply by implication, that to discard psychoanalysis while trying to understand women is comparable to discarding the microscope before studying biology. Now, moving along a clear line from that book, she brings us a subtle and compelling biography of the talented invalid who was Alice James.

The only James daughter fell heir to the keen intelligence, emotional convolutedness, and physical disorders that fueled the work of William and Henry. There's no way to know whether under the right circumstances these might have ignited into genius, for unlike William and Henry she was actively discouraged from building a structure of work and achievement that might have warred with her difficult emotional heritage.

Idealization and underestimation, the companionable twins, ruled the view of women in the James household. It was woman's destiny to bear children and her mission to make men happy. Alice didn't have the strength to leave home, marry, and raise children, and the men she wanted to please were her father and two oldest brothers. As a result she spent her life between a pedestal and a sickbed.

It's only fair to mention that two other brothers bracketed Alice's birth. Neurotic, sickly, unaccomplished, they were somehow the orphans of the James family. They were sent to school to study real subjects while Alice was tutored at home with whichever boys were ill at the moment. But they never had the mixed yet real benefit of their father's narcissistic, loving absorption in their lives.

"Maternal force and emotional parsimony," Strouse tells us, "characterize the female lineage of the James family." Little more is said about the mother of these extraordinary children, who was apparently the kind of stoic men marry when they want to be cared for while maintaining their fantasies about the nature of women.

Henry James, Sr., had been a reckless, disobedient youth who found his pleasure in disobedience heightened by his terror of God's vengeance. Finally he wreaked vengeance upon himself. At 17, while playing a dangerous game with fire, he was badly burned on one leg, which was later amputated above the knee. This period of extraordinary agony held one reward: A father who had always been cold and indifferent to him became warm and devoted. The lesson wasn't lost on Henry and may have held within it the seeds of the disastrous medical history of the entire family.

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Alice James: "Inverted vitality."

Fifty-four years later Alice would die (at 44) more happily than she had ever lived because in her final months she had the *undivided* love and attention of the woman who had been her nurse and closest friend. She left behind her: letters full of funny, astringent remarks on those not too near or too dear to her; diaries kept only in the last years of her life, showing a social historian of considerable acuity and deep, emotional partisanship; a set of gems on the lips of the women in Henry's novels, apparently close enough to Alice's words to cause him some discomfort.

"The diary produces a unique and tragic impression of personal power venting itself on no opportunity. And

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such really *deep* humor!" This is William, reading the diary for the first time — indeed, learning of its existence — only after Alice's death. Her brothers were not to know that she was venturing even this much in competition with them.

Of course, we do not all go so gently into a pre-ordained night. Women have written books and led adventurous lives without having fathers who approved of their doing either. It is here on that difficult terrain where our parents' desires for us become or don't become our own that Strouse spends much of her time with Alice. We see Alice's half-serious vision of herself ("... for I consider myself one of the most potent creatures of our time") warring with her father's serious vision of what a woman should be. ("Even the ten commandments seem unamiable and superfluous on her lips, so much should her own pure pleasure form the best outward law for man.") We hear Alice joking that if she put her mind to it she would outstrip her brothers. We know there's no such thing as a simple joke, and often Alice seems to know this isn't one. What better solution than invalidism to both her desire to best her brothers and her fear that in all good health she could not do so?

She found her perfect metaphor in politics, where she was joyously radical; heatedly against every form of government oppression; fond of praising America, "the embodiment of a huge choice for hemmed-in humanity," at the expense of rigid, class-bound England. But she had to live in England to feel that way about her mother country, perhaps because the latter contained her father land. A country where a powerful woman writer couldn't function without fear of losing her citizenship.

Alice didn't want to be thought of in terms of what she might have been. Strouse understands that desire but consistently thwarts it. The book would be far less fascinating than it is if it didn't portray, in all her complexity, a person of enormous intelligence, inverted vitality, ambition turned against itself. It seems to me an extremely fine piece of work. ■

Judith Rossner's *Emmeline* has just been published by Simon & Schuster.

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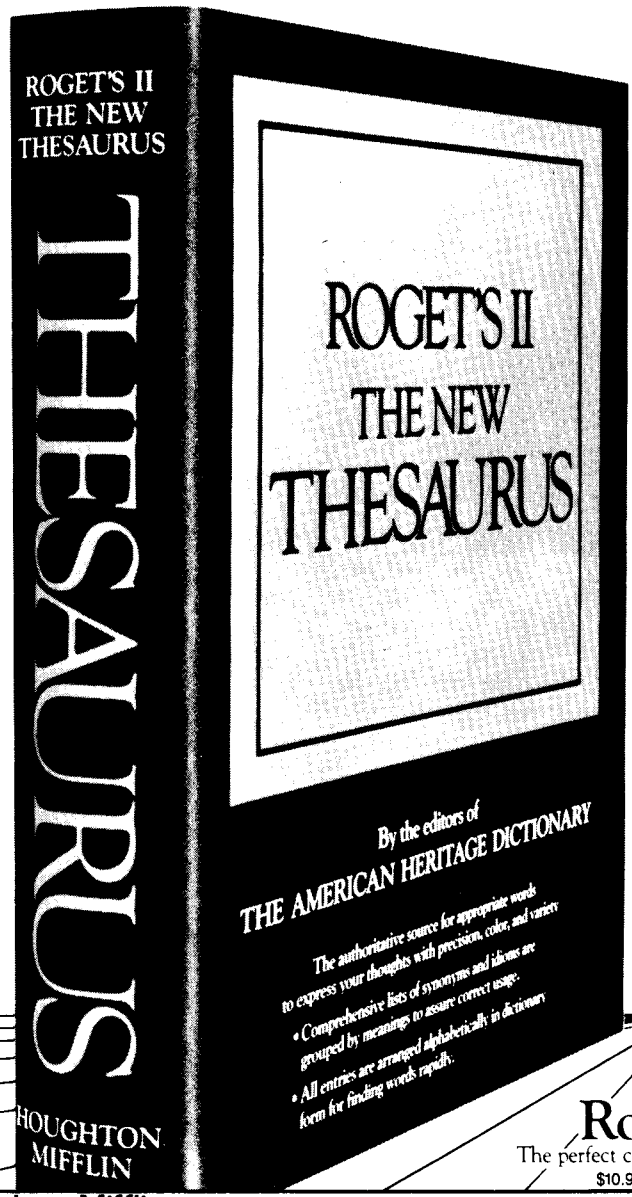
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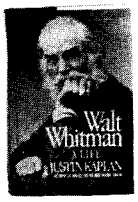
BOOK REVIEW

The Search for Walt Whitman

by Donald Hall



Walt Whitman: A Life
by Justin Kaplan
Simon & Schuster
416 pp., $13.95

As Justin Kaplan says of *Leaves of Grass*, "There is nothing quite like it in literature." Yet when Whitman mailed Emerson a copy of the first edition, in 1855, the philosopher of transcendence—who knew nothing of Whitman, whose own verse was conventional—responded with a letter of unmatched generosity and insight. Emerson welcomed Whitman "at the start of a great career" and spoke of "the long foreground" that must have preceded such a collection.

In this delicate, calm, and painstaking biography, Kaplan attempts "to look for the biographically rational line of development that led from the journalist-loafer to the incomparable poet." The question has persisted: What made this man a great poet? Emerson's "long foreground" grows more puzzling as we first learn of Whitman's background—his family, his childhood and youth, the education that ended when he was eleven, his alternate work as desultory journalist and unhappy schoolteacher.

The common answers beg more questions. If Whitman was Emersonian, Emerson's package of ideas is commonly available in the 19th century, not only in Emerson but in Thomas Carlyle and in romantic German philosophers. His nationalist or Democratic dogmas, reduced to prose, sound like a thousand newspapers of his time. Other poets prophecied American epics—and wrote *Hiawatha*. It is the poetry itself, and only the poetry itself, that is new.

Still, no amount of reference to Hebrew parallelism, to the King James Bible, or to the Bible-bathed oratory of the day will account for the mighty line Whitman invented. No record of his reading explains the virtual surrealism of "The Sleepers," or the innovative construction of "Song of Myself." Kaplan summarizes: "... for all such parallels, resemblances, echoes, borrowings, or influences, whether direct or reflective of the spirit of the age, it is useless to look outside Whitman himself ....'"

Yet not quite useless: By his orchestration of detail, Kaplan shows us not one or two sources for Whitman's images and innovations but a thousand sources, amounting to a background. His method is not to analyze a poem for its origins, as Lowes did with "Kubla Khan," but to recount the dense days of a life, the incidents of a busy Manhattan—and then to juxtapose a relevant line from a poem; let the reader note and judge the connection. Others have suggested the importance of photography to Whitman's vision; Kaplan juxtaposes Whitman's emblem of the mind—"In a little house pictures I keep"—with both "Plumbe's daguerrotype gallery on Broadway" and the cover illustration of a magazine devoted to phrenology. Others have noted Whitman's use of the language of contemporary pseudoscience, animal magnetism, as well as phrenology; Kaplan quotes widely from this esoterica, adds Whitman's reading in the Egyptian religion of Osiris, documents his addiction to grand opera. The accumulaton of ingredients considerably reduces, while it does not dispel, the mystery of the long foreground.

Whitman may or may not have *believed* in these pseudosciences. In Kaplan's words, they "supplied him with a structure of belief, the underpinnings of a personal mythology." He used them as Yeats used his gyres and phases of the moon. Whitman reminds us also of Yeats's doctrines of self and anti-self, for Whitman shows a familliar doubleness—the man who is his own opposite. In an example that Kaplan beautifully delineates, Whitman proclaims himself the prophet of molecular survival, compost-heap immortality, who will become the grass we walk upon; and on the other hand, Whitman becomes the architect pharoah of his own gross and impregnable tomb. This contradiction—it cannot be called hyprocrisy—repeats itself throughout his life. The author of *Mr. Clements and Mark Twain* is alert to every occasion of paradox.

Kaplan begins his narrative toward the end of Whitman's life, with Traubel's well-documented Whitman of Mickle Street in Camden: the old man who wonderfully described himself as "crafty and furtive like an old hen." Kaplan is not so nervous as earlier writers on the subject of Whitman's sexuality—that subject about which we know little and all we need to know. The general direction of Whitman's sexual feelings is clear, and his homoerotic feelings underlie—and supply images for—egalitarian ideas.

After Whitman's death Kaplan returns to the beginning. He was a family man, close to his mother, to his sisters, and to several brothers, notably to Jeff the youngest, to Eddy who was feeble-minded, and to practical George, who put him up in Camden when he suffered his first strokes. Father Walter is a difficult character, apparently a drunkard and certainly unlucky, who embodies a strain of the American character that has received too little attention. Walter was

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enlightened and grumpy, free-thinking, populist, anti-capitalist, a village atheist-socialist before his time.

Kaplan is a superb biographer, a master of the forms of factuality, who understands the poignancy of exactness: the names of the opera singers Whitman thrilled to, their voices gone forever. He excels in relating physical details: "He weighed two hundred pounds and was about six feet tall, had big hands and feet. His body was rosy and soft, like a child's . . ."—how wonderful the word "rosy." We hear of Whitman's annual lecture on Lincoln, which even Charles Eliot Norton and James Russell Lowell attended—not to mention Mark Twain, José Marti, and the American French symbolist poet Stuart Merrill. We learn that Whitman as a child attended Lafayette's return, that he saw John Jacob Astor plain, and that he watched Junius Brutus Booth play Richard III on June 8, 1835, when he was 16 years old. As a young newspaperman, before he wrote *Leaves of Grass,* Walt Whitman knew Edgar Allan Poe (who published his journalism); he knew William Cullen Bryant; he saw Charles Dickens on his first American tour.

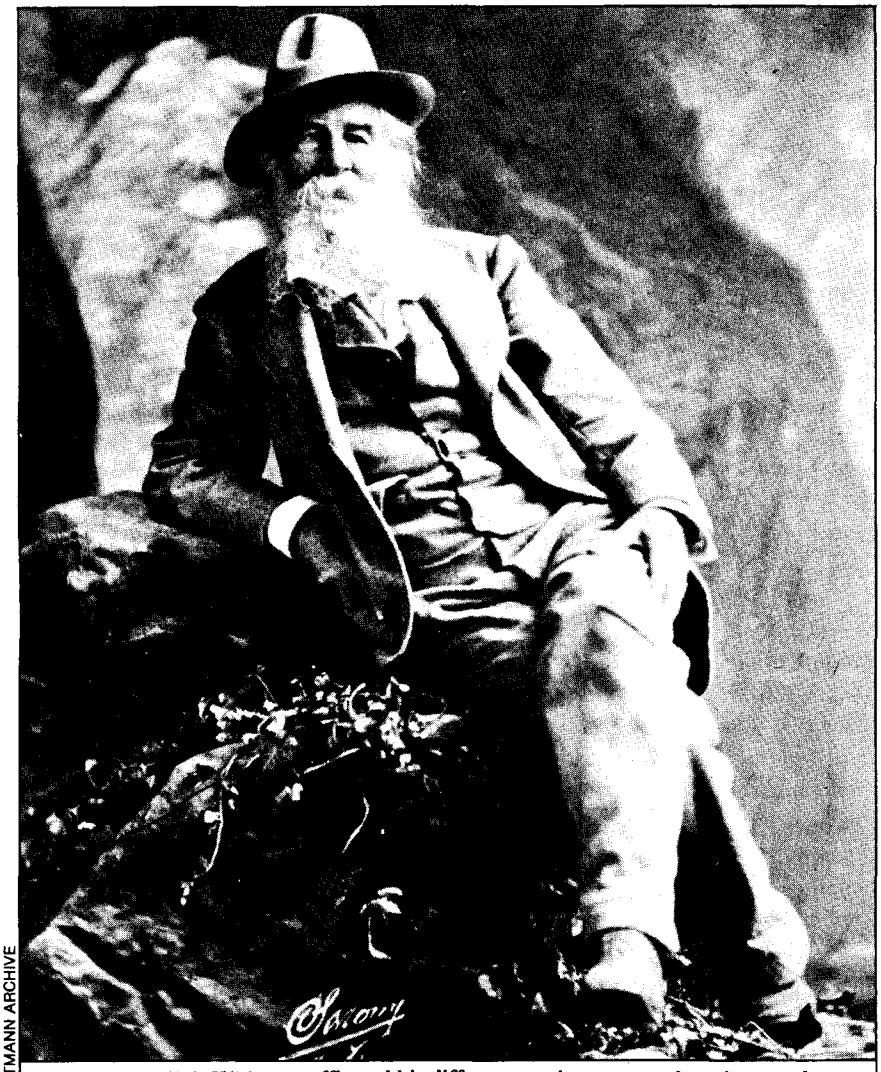
We delight to discover Pfaff's beer cellar, and the wits who gathered there, men and women, including the great Adah Isaacs Menken, who "attempted a liaison with Swinburne but failed to earn the ten-pound reward that Dante Gabriel Rossetti offered if she got Swinburne into bed. . . ." Pfaff's central figure is Henry Clapp, editor of the *Saturday Press,* as witty as George S. Kaufman. We observe with appropriate compassion Whitman's impossible loves, for Peter Doyle especially, and the hopeless love women felt for him—particularly Anne Gilchrist.

We learn as well that Whitman pronounced "poem" (in the manner of New York) "pome." In this enunciation he was different—as in all things. Even Whittier, the only nonpatrician among the New England poets, had more education than Whitman. The Bostonians wore their three names like Phi Beta Kappa keys, while Walt diminished his own name by one syllable. Consciousness of his difference—in money, in education, in sex—helped him to seek out and affirm his difference as a poet.

The most literal, visible, obvious difference in his poetry is his long, asymmetrical line—a line with many pauses in it, which repeats its rhythm unmetrically, and does not rhyme. The difference is wholly important, because when he tosses it aside—notably in "O Captain My Captain"—he writes conventional junk, less competent than the well-worked verses of the Bostonians. Many poets have attested to the efficacy, even the primacy, of sound or rhythm—have attested that noise comes first and content after. Some poets flounder for years until they find a personal line, then flower with it.

Only when Whitman discovers Whitman's *line* can he write *Leaves of Grass,* and become the greatest of our poets. For if "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" is not the greatest poem written by an American (as I would call it) than that poem is "Song of Myself" or "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" or "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" or "The Sleepers."

Justin Kaplan is a biographer worthy of his subject, not least because he can *write.* He ends the book, taking us back to the time of the book's beginning, with this sentence: "An old man who never married and had no heart's companion now except his book, he rode contentedly at anchor on the waters of the past." ■



BETTMANN ARCHIVE

As a poet, Walt Whitman affirmed his differences—in money, education, and sex.

Donald Hall's recent books are *Remembering Poets* and *The Ox-Cart Man.*

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The War of the Words

by John Ciardi

On Language
by William Safire
Times Books
310 pp., $12.95

William Safire's column on the American language is the lead article of the *New York Times Magazine*, and by now it has become a fixed point of the Sunday landscape, the first thing one looks at upon daring the day to stay rational. If the *Times* can be said to reach the nation, Safire occupies the Sunday morning chair of the Committee on the American Language.

The rest of the committee consists of hundreds of vigilant letter-writers who heap Safire's desk with amplifications, appreciations, and what he calls "shame-on-you's." In his column, Safire often groups examples of usage and misusage to illustrate a theme. Here in the book, the entries are arranged in alphabetical order, and with the addition of those letters from the readers, the declarations of the column are enlarged into a stated meeting of the Language Committee.

Safire by himself is a sharp-eyed reporter with a deftly gentle wit. Safire in session with his letter-writers is host to a symposium. *Symposium*, as Safire would say, is from Greek roots meaning "with wine pouring." As I wish he would say, it is from Greek *sym*, with, and *posis*, a pouring; the understood reference being to an after-dinner discussion over the wine goblets. Plato presents his *symposium* in just this form. Everything is up for discussion, and those letter-writing readers will not let any of Safire's *faux pas* go unchallenged.

Safire is candid in giving equal space to his often poor report cards from the readers. One senses that he is admittedly uncertain of his authority to pronounce on usage and misusage. He states his position in his foreword, "the great permitter":

> Rules? Who the hell are you and I, then, to arrogate the right to make or defend rules, to assume responsiblility for deciding what is "correct," to dictate what is to be embraced as good, preferred, or "standard" usage—and what is to be ridiculed and reviled as vulgar, barbaric, or confusing?

We are the people who care; we've registered for the linguistic primary. Our interest is our power.

I share most deeply with Safire his sense that language-discussed is language-preserved. In pursuit of preservation, Safire makes passing bows to the roots of the language-tree, but he does not venture further back to the point at which the branch emerges from the trunk. He is most comfortable and most able among the outermost floss of the flowering, at whatever the finials might be, could a flower be said to have finials.

I make these points because Safire by virtue of his enormous audience may be up for media-canonization as a supreme arbiter—as the media have somehow elevated Walter Cronkite's endless but starred drone to a sort of

COURTESY NEW YORK TIMES

Safire's "heavy competence" may win him media canonization as supreme arbiter.

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sanctified wisdom, when it is in fact no more than a heavy sort of competence.

The vision of Safirius Arbiter is an awesome one, since Safire is neither an entomologist nor an expert on usage. He is a keen reporter at his splendid best in such reports as the one here labeled "Kissingerese," a star coverage of the idiom of Henry the Pompous. He is in sure command in discussing the government's "wholesale index" and his reasons for avoiding the word "wholesale." He is sprightly in covering what he calls "Mondegreens" (from the ballad line "and laid him on the green," distorted to "and Lady Mondegreen.") As an exchange of pleasures, let me offer him one: "fantasy echo." I once had a student who kept speaking of the "fantasy echo" of poetry. After some confusion I realized that she was taking a course in late 19th-century literature, and that "fantasy echo" was what she had made of *fin de siècle*.

Safire, in what I can only think of as a boxed witticism, decides that formal rhetoricians' terms founded on Greek roots "sound like fancified dirty words" and utterly rejects them. But Safire does now and then refer to a Greek or Latin root: His first entry, Ace, he says, is "from the Latin word for single unit." (Really a single unit, Mr. Safire? Do you keep a supply of double and triple units?) In discussing "thank you very much," Safire concludes, "Some say it [I can find no grammatical reference for "it," but I guess Safire means the idiom under discussion] comes directly from *merci beaucoup* or *muchas gracias*— I doubt it." Is "I doubt it" a snappy journalistic sign-off? I see nothing to doubt. From where I sit at the language movie "thank you much" and "much thanks" appear as simple sequential side-buddings.

Safire, I submit, is not qualified as a language arbiter. Nor need he try to be one. Anyone who dares put words on paper knows how error evades the proofreading only to leap howling in derision from the published text. I am engaged and rewarded by this maculate Safire, and more so when he is attended by his letter-writers. ■

John Ciardi's most recent book, just released, is *A Browser's Dictionary and Native's Guide to the Unknown American Language* (Harper & Row).

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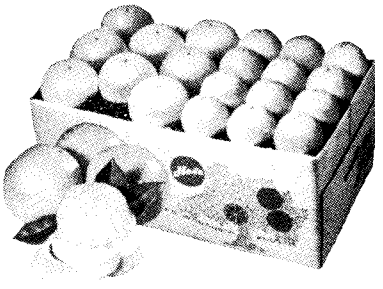

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BOOK BRIEFS

Fiction

A Man
by Oriana Fallaci
translated by William Weaver
Simon & Schuster, 512 pp., $14.95

THE HERO OF *A Man,* Allessandro Panagoulis, tries to assassinate the Greek dictator George Papadopoulis. He fails, but even after mutilating tortures and years of imprisonment in a tomblike cell, he never bows his head to Papadopoulis' dictatorship. His humor and the freedom that he guards within preserve his pride and sanity.

Oriana Fallaci's *A Man* is a majestic and soul-stirring narration of her relationship with Panagoulis and the events that led to his murder by political agents in 1976, told as if it were fiction. Best known for her brilliant and decidedly subjective political interviews, she has learned from them how to control the novel. Here, as in her interviews, she begins with a feverish force, standing back just in time to let the subject empower itself with its own emotional energy. She recreates for history a modern hero: His fatal flaw is his trust in the ability of other men "to be free, to have courage, to struggle, to assume one's responsibilities." She has written her novel to Panagoulis, "to you," with the passion of one who loves not only the tale, but also the language with which it is told, who loved not only the man, but also the liberty for which he fought.

Panagoulis wants no party, he wants no ideology, he wants only to fight for the freedom of men. But he finds that men are cowards, too afraid of governmental power to accept emancipation when Panagoulis offers it. In telling of this fruitless search, Fallaci has forged a work of transcendent Greek tragedy.

—JULIE STONE PETERS

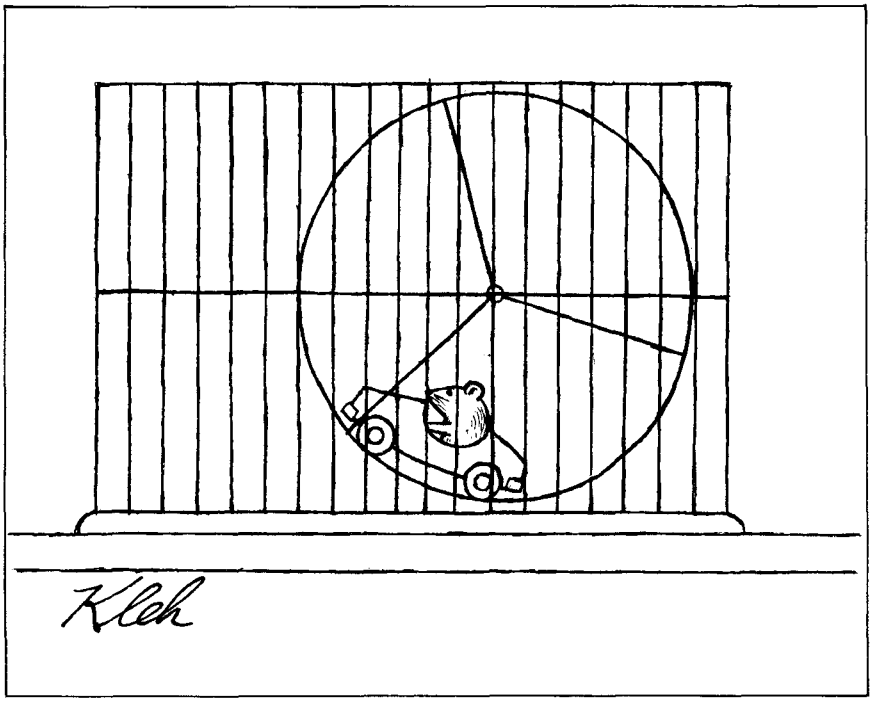
The Book of Laughter and Forgetting
by Milan Kundera
translated by Michael Henry Heim
Alfred A. Knopf, 240 pp., $9.95

THIS "NOVEL in the form of variations" is a series of seven responses to a single event: After a Party leader was charged with treason and hanged, the Communist Czechoslovakia propaganda apparatus airbrushed his face out of a famous ceremonial photograph. These meditations on the state's denial of memory involve a number of different imaginary characters and occasionally author Milan Kundera himself. Against the bleak voids of a self-obliterating history are set the gentle human comedies of people trying to restore or revise their own past. They are always tempted to forget, to relive their innocence, to act like sinister children, to indulge in mindless sex, or to dance to mindless music.

In one "variation," a formerly prominent man tries to recover personally embarrassing love letters from an ex-mistress; meanwhile, the state ransacks his apartment, confiscating all the other, officially embarrassing documents of his life. In another variation, an old woman mixes up her memories of forgetting the final lines in a childhood recitation; meanwhile, her son achieves a fleeting moment of infantile ecstasy while acting out a long remembered childhood fantasy with his wife and mistress.

Kundera is a delightful writer, a more demanding and elegant Vonnegut. This is a somber and amusing book.

—CHARLES NICOL



Ray
by Barry Hannah
Alfred A. Knopf, 128 pp., $7.95

RAY IS A FORMER fighter pilot in Vietnam, a doctor who dispenses morphine and Valium, and the lover of several women in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. His problem is too much drinking and sleeping around. He loves his wife, but he also loves Sister Hooch, who writes songs about high misery. "Sister, I have serious doubts and a filthy conscience," Ray confides, and Sister answers, "Not near filthy enough for me."

Sister is shot in the middle of her nightclub act by a repressed Baptist

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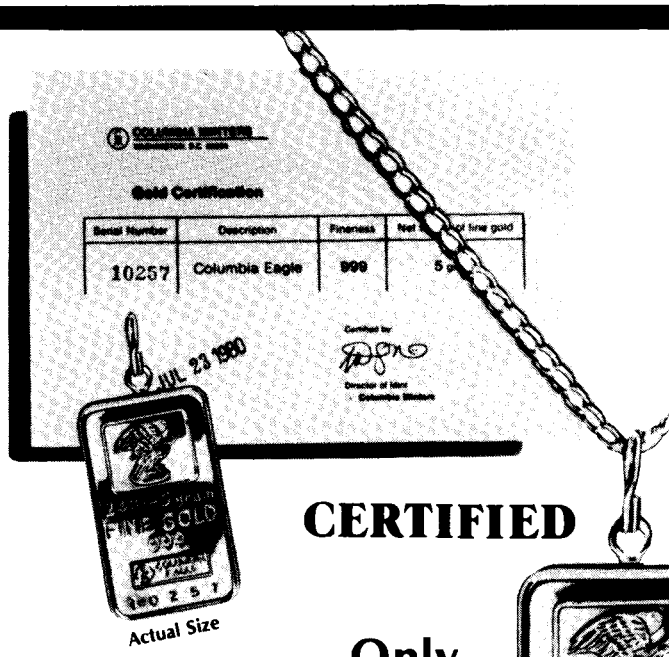

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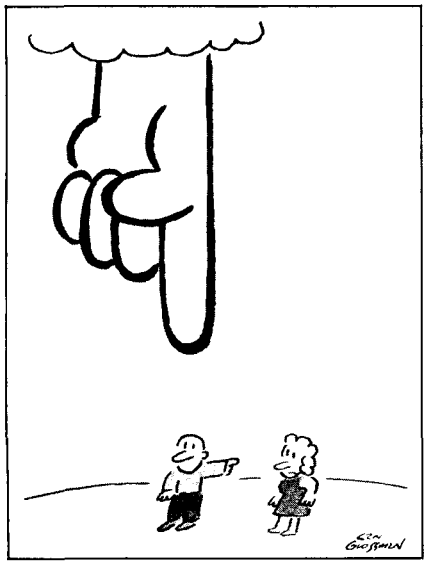
BOOK BRIEFS

preacher, and Ray himself pulls the plug on one of his good-for-nothing patients. Violence is part of his imagination; sometimes he thinks he has been a captain in the Confederate cavalry, and often he remembers seeing a buddy in Vietnam turned by an enemy missile into "a big white flower spraying into the night." "I am infected with every disease I ever tried to cure," Ray complains, for he shares the contrarities of "gentleness and rage together" that he sees in the hearts of Americans. He knows that some people are just plain not worth saving.

Barry Hannah, who wrote the extravagantly praised *Airships,* is a master of the short form. Yet this new book often reads like a collection of sketches. It is diffuse—characters are introduced once and forgotten, incidents go nowhere—and this failure of continuity deprives the book of the cumulative power it should have. *Ray* is laconic, mean, raunchy, and very funny, but not as moving as it means to be. —RONALD NEVANS

Stanley Elkin's Greatest Hits
by Stanley Elkin
E.P. Dutton, 288 pp., $9.95

EXCERPTS FROM novels can leave a reader feeling slightly cheated, suspecting that something essential has been left out. But these selections from seven of Stanley Elkin's novels are self-contained and highly provocative short stories—wholly original inquests into our uneasy American lives.



The hitherto unheralded ragsellers, wrestlers, and merchants, Elkin's characters are refreshingly intelligent men grappling with a riotously out-of-joint world. In "Mr. Softee," a stalwart ice cream merchant stricken with M.S. is pitted not only against a roommate who persists in calling him Mr. Softee, but also against a power failure that creates a "high tide of vanilla" in his stores. In "The Transient," a young, mortality-conscious wrestler builds his body "to ward off death," only to meet the next time out a fighter named the Grim Reaper in the ring.

These situations are heightened by the indefatigable eloquence of Mr. Elkin's prose, which may also be the collection's only problem. One wonders how an untutored body-builder can say: "For four years I sat naked and wet on the low peeling bench by my locker, making with others the rude, brutal shoptalk of athletes or drying myself with the intense absorption of a soldier cleaning his weapon." And yet, it is precisely this eloquence that makes these selections so rewarding, whether the reader is relishing familiar passages or delighting in Mr. Elkin for the first time. —ROBIN BROMLEY

Congo
by Michael Crichton
Alfred A. Knopf, 352 pp., $10.95

"THE WONDROUS ADVENTURES of the Supercomputer Gang in Darkest Africa" would nicely subtitle this marvelous update on H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* as revealed by a solemnly academic anonymous researcher. Our heroes' entrance into the Lost City of Zinj, he tells us, "... was accomplished with none of the mystery and romance of the 19th-century accounts of similar journeys. These 20th-century explorers sweated and grunted under a burdensome load of technical equipment—optical range finders, data-lock compasses, RF directionals with attached transmitters, and microwave transponders—all deemed essential to the modern, high-speed evaluation of a ruined archaeological site."

Michael Crichton is always a gripping hard-science storyteller and here he overflows with energy. True, *The Terminal Man* and *The Andromeda Strain,* among his earlier novels, gave thrills at the cost of character and ended with little more than a slap on Faust's wrist for his obsession with improving human life through futuristic hardware. In *Congo* he outdoes himself with hardware, especially a portable computer terminal that allows scientists access to Niagaras of information as they hack their way through the dripping "enormous hot, dark womb" of the rain forest in search of the diamond mines of Zinj. His pedantry about a half dozen sciences is inspirited padding, but he has created in Amy, a "talking gorilla" of enough charm to enshrine her in pop culture as firmly as R2D2 and C-3PO. She steals the book with her 92 IQ and by speaking in signs like a mute. When she runs off to join a newly discovered species of gray gorilla, and later returns to her trainer Peter, it is "a crucial moment in modern primate history. A language-skilled ape had joined a wild troop, and had then come back again." Crichton's climax is colossal—volcanic eruption, earthquake, an electric storm dropping 200 bolts per minute. What entertainment!

—DONALD NEWLOVE

Aztec
by Gary Jennings
Atheneum, 768 pp., $15.95

UNLIKE MOST books about the Aztecs, Gary Jennings's is not as dead as its subject matter. His *Aztec,* a *Shogun*-esque novel about pre-conquest Mexico, is a gripping piece of historical fiction. Many modern Mexicans would prob-

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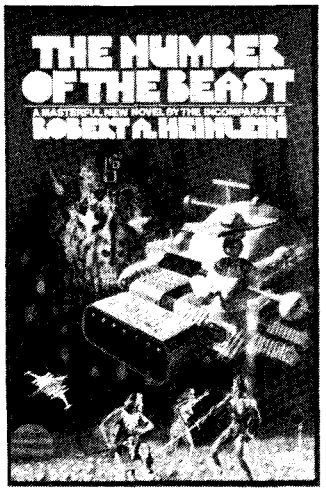

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST
by Robert A. Heinlein

The future according to Heinlein has always been a world of challenge: peopled by extraordinary individuals, framed by powerful philosophies and infused with a far-sighted social and technological imagination. A new work by this science fiction master is always eagerly awaited—and this is the first Heinlein novel to be published in seven years.

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST is a tour de force that pays homage to the spectacular range of science fiction and fantasy creations from past writers, and from Heinlein's own imaginative past. The title is derived from a series of alternative universes, a series whose possibilities total 666—the number of alternatives for each of six time-space coordinates and also "the number of the beast," or Satan, from Revelations. 512 pgs.

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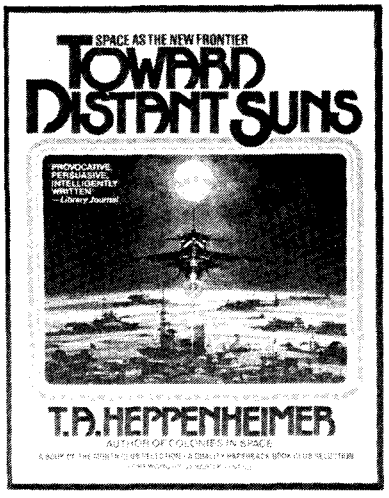

TOWARD DISTANT SUNS
by T.A. Heppenheimer

The subtitle of this book could very well be: "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Future in Space...but Didn't Know Who to Ask!" A well-known aerospace engineer, T.A. Heppenheimer, has written a thought-provoking and very informative book about the future in space living—a book filled with *science faction* material that will appeal to almost everyone, thanks to Heppenheimer's engaging and logical—yet surprising—revelations about our (not too distant) future.

According to the author, man will turn to space as the new frontier, and as our ancestors set out for distant shores on the earth. However, Heppenheimer goes one step further in showing how present conditions on earth will naturally lead to space colonies—perhaps as early as the mid-21st century!

Included are such riveting and unusual topics as: love and sex in space, the "real" future of space colonies, changes in the sociobiological future of the human race, a space academy, and robots. 256 pgs.

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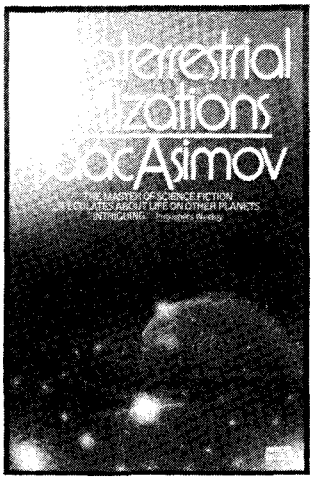

EXTRATERRESTRIAL CIVILIZATIONS
by Isaac Asimov

One of America's best popular science writers explores the question: Are we alone? Are human beings the only possessors of eyes that probe the depths of the Universe? The only builders of devices to extend the natural senses? The only minds that strive to understand and interpret what is seen and sensed? The answer is: We are *not* alone! Asimov begins with the earth and, expanding outward, explores the nature of all known bodies in the heavens—from planets to moon to stars, to sunlike stars to earth-like planets. He shows the conditions needed for life and pinpoints those heavenly bodies on which there is no possibility for life. 288 pgs.

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BOOK BRIEFS

ably be pleased that a *gringo* bothered to research for over 10 years and write so accessibly about their ancestors. In this vivid epic, Jennings conveys 16th-century Aztec daily life—hieroglyphic classes, magic mushroom preparations, sacrificial rituals, sophisticated plumbing technology—through the voice of the amiable Mixtli. In picaresque fashion, Mixtli travels the length and breadth of Mexico, working as scribe, merchant, warrior, and ambassador to Montezuma, and sampling women from practically every Mexican ethnic group. Notable encounters are with his voluptuous sister, Tzitzilini; with Princess "Jadestone Doll," who makes sculptures out of murdered lovers; and with a mother and her twin daughters. Mixtli's journey ends with the arrival of the sadistic, pock-marked Spaniards who ravage and plunder his land, and burn him for being a heretic.

It is unlikely that an Aztec of lowly birth would have experienced such a variety of adventures, but the spectrum provides a perfect opportunity to describe all facets of pre-Colombian society. Jennings's imagination goes too far, though. He is not content with describing rich Aztec culture, but graphically inserts every conceivable violent and perverse act. Gratuitous accounts of lesbian rape, scatology, and impalement on stakes don't do much to further his point that the Aztecs were more civilized than their white conquerors. But despite the sensationalism, *Aztec* is a substantial novel—and bound to be a popular one.

— JUDITH MATLOFF

Unfinished Tales of Numenor and Middle-earth
by J.R.R. Tolkien
Houghton Mifflin, 472 pp., $15

WE SEEM, finally, after much exploitation, to have reached the bottom of the barrel for Tolkieniana with the publication of this book, whose title is an unintentional two-edged sword. Tolkien never completed these tales — in fact, some are in note-form — and

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many readers will fall by the wayside in their struggles to reach the non-ends of these unfinished tales.

One must be a true believer in the late Oxford don's completely equipped private universe to want to persevere. And even if you are, every nook and cranny of Middle-earth and Numenor is stuffed with names. No character can speak without name-dropping, and just when you are getting used to someone, Tolkien will change the name. Thus, Turin, son of Hurin and Morwen, the hero of the lay Narin I Hin Hurin, becomes for various reasons Neithan, Agarwaen, Thurin, Mormegil, Turambar, and the Wildman of the Woods. Even when he is about to kill himself, for having murdered Brandir who told him that his pregnant wife, the Lady Niniel, was really his sister Nienor, he can't do it without mentioning a few names. "Hail, Gurthang, Iron of Death," he says to his sword, "will thou slay me swiftly."

Although this book is not without its charms, it is not top-drawer Tolkien. It is all that is left.

—ARTHUR SPIEGELMAN

Shatterday
by Harlan Ellison
Houghton Mifflin, 332 pp., $11.95

BECAUSE HARLAN ELLISON pretends that he is just a nice guy who has dropped in to read you his latest tale, you drop your defenses and wham—you discover he is a horror-story writer in disguise. Things do not go bump in Ellison's tales. That would be too easy. Instead, his heroes crash into the night en route to final, fatal meetings.

In "Shatterday," the title story of this excellent collection of 15 recently written tales, a man's alter-ego apologetically takes over his life, reducing him from substance to shadow and then to memory. In "Jeffty Is Five," a man lives for 22 years as a perfectly adorable five-year-old until the world cannot stand it any longer. In "All the Birds Come Home to Roost," a man suddenly starts remeeting all the women in his

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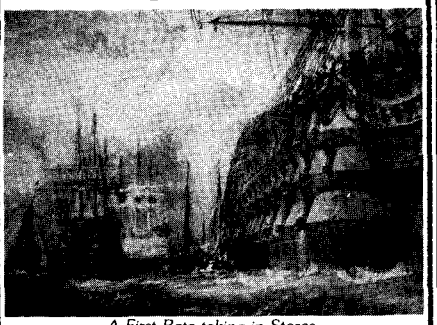

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BOOK BRIEFS

life, until he is gripped with panic at the thought of meeting the first, who was mad beyond words.

Ellison introduces each tale with what, at first, seems endearing chit-chat about his life. The chit-chat quickly turns vicious. He names the worst of his four wives. He tells you that the last one left him for another man. He assails a nameless friend for betraying him. Soon, it is clear that Ellison believes the real horror is private life. He tells the reader that he has discovered that the pain of a lost love lasts 12 minutes. For Ellison, a romantic, this is the worst discovery of all—he wants the pain to last and last and last.

—ARTHUR SPIEGELMAN

No Hard Feelings
by Marty Bell
The Viking Press, 231 pp., $10.95

EDDIE EGG, the hero of this novel, feels obliged to defend that endangered species, the American male. If women have been maltreated, Eddie Egg, single, moderately moneyed, of a liberal temperament, seeks equal recognition in the suffering sweepstakes. Women he has tried to date have tricked him by writing the Pentagon's telephone number into his matchbook instead of their own home numbers.

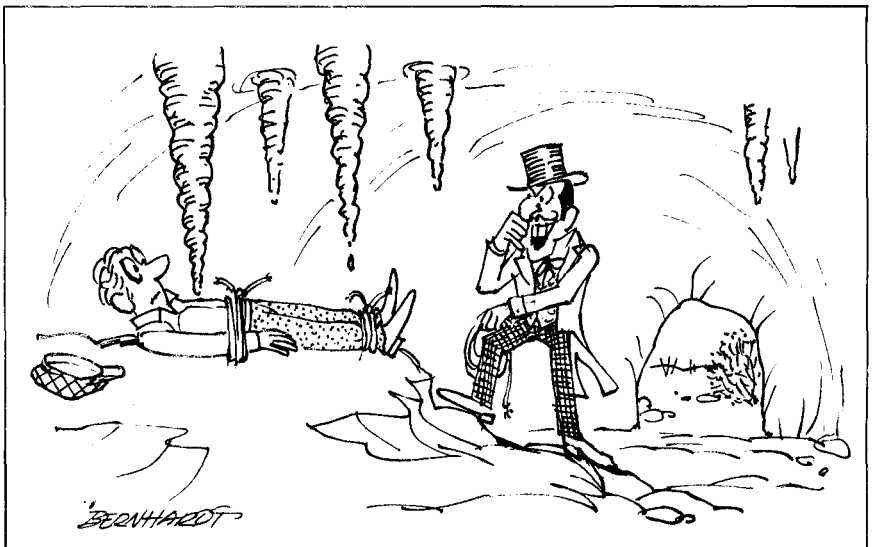
Although this novel purports to be a refreshing view of singlehood from a man's point of view, Eddie merely proves that men can be just as tedious as women in their analyses of their own psyches. Eddie muses at length about repeated failed relationships, his difficult childhood, his paining soul, but his insights, which seem to have been cribbed from current pop psychology handbooks, never elevate this book much above the trite and banal.

—PHILLIS BIRNBAUM

Nonfiction

The End of Order, Versailles, 1919
by Charles L. Mee, Jr.
E.P. Dutton, 410 pp., $15.95

AT THE END of World War I, with the earth in shambles, the Allied leaders gathered in Paris to write a peace treaty. They came dazzled by their own visions and Europe's applause, and burdened with the world's hope that their treaty



"It'll be a slow death for you, Armistead!"

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would lay the foundation for a new order of social justice and lasting peace. They proceeded to construct a document of malice with which they uncorked the drab madness of our present age.

The End of Order is not a scholarly examination of the issues, causes, and effects of the Treaty of Versailles. Mee concentrates on personalities: an American president not half as great as his ideals; a French premier every inch as powerful as his cynicism; an English prime minister as mercurial as the fate of empire; and a host of lesser dignitaries, gathered to usher in the chaos of the 20th century with inelegant bows. Mee writes of Wilson, Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and the others as if his nose were pressed to the conference room windows. Yet for all that intimacy, and despite an occasional oversimplification, he manages to create a sense of how little men with petty passions can become the impetus behind the ebb and flow of historical order. —ANDREW KLAVEN

Ideas and the Novel
by Mary McCarthy
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
128 pp., $8.95

IN THIS DECEPTIVELY short essay, Mary McCarthy mounts a ferocious attack on the post-modern novel and calls for a return to the philosophical novel, or the "novel of ideas." The argument is a familiar one, but so brilliantly and passionately argued that she forces us all to man our battle stations once again. Ranged on her side are such opponents of the so-called pure or "art" novel as Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, Doris Lessing, Iris Murdoch, and even John Gardner, whose *On Moral Fiction* was a mere swarm of gnats compared to the jaws of McCarthy's mighty intellect.

The problem, as she sees it, can be traced to Henry James, of whom T.S. Eliot said: "He had a mind so fine that no idea could violate it." To remind us of what we have lost, she offers a dazzling reinterpretation of such 19th-century favorites as Stendhal, Balzac, Hugo, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy; noting along the way that continental novelists are more attuned to political vibrations than the English, and giving the American novel short shrift. ("Melville and Hawthorne. . . seldom expressed themselves on topics and issues of the day, and their utterances could be somewhat riddling on the great themes of good and evil.")

It's not necessary to agree with Mary McCarthy in order to admire this book. She will certainly stir up controversy, and perhaps her call to arms will alter the fate of the Western novel in the 21st century. —CAROLE COOK

The Last Word:
An Eye-Witness Account of the Trial of Jeremy Thorpe
by Auberon Waugh
Little, Brown, 252 pp., $11.95

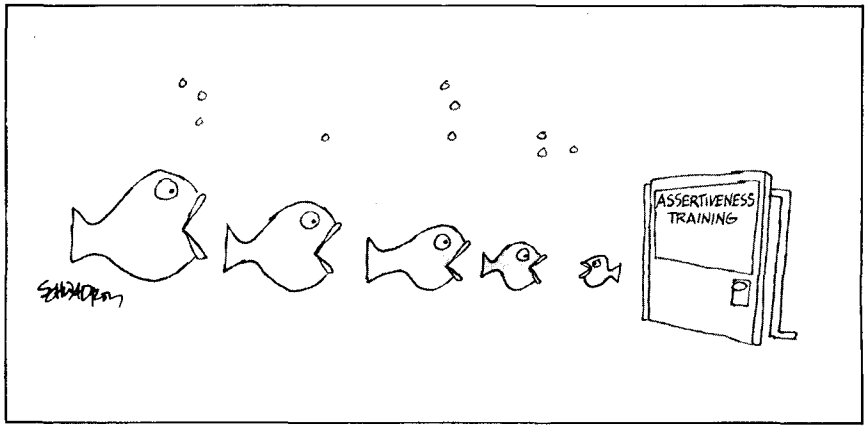
IN 1979, Liberal party leader and M.P. Jeremy Thorpe stood trial with three others on the charge of conspiracy to murder Norman Scott, allegedly Thorpe's former lover. From Auberon Waugh's brilliant documentation of the proceedings emerges the hint of a corruption that may have tainted the London courtroom, if not the entire realm.

Throughout the trial, the judge seemed alternately to discredit the prosecution witnesses and to commend the defendants. The gentlemanly prosecutor watched politely as the Crown's crucial witness was demolished by the ridicule of the judge and the sophistries of the defense. When the jury, confused by all the inchoate argumentation, requested more information, the judge responded, ". . . If you want to know any more the answer is, 'You never will . . . the curtains are down . . . .' " Intimations of a possible cover-up involving public figures died with the closing of the case and the subsequent acquittal of the defendants.

In following the case, Waugh has tempered his biting wit and allowed the dramatis personae to speak up and condemn themselves. His own disinterested and perceptive comments completely avoid the predilection for moral posturing and melodrama that characterizes much of the reportage of political corruption in our own country. By book's end, the reader may be reminded of what essayist John Selden said over three hundred years ago. "We see the judges look like lions, but we do not see who moves them."
DAVID BELL

Catherine the Great
by Henri Troyat
translated by Joan Pinkham
E. P. Dutton, 502 pp., $15.95

AMONG WOMEN RULERS, only Cleopatra and Elizabeth I rival the allure that Catherine the Great inspires in the Western imagination. This unknown German princess, who at 13 had to



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Prepared for the layman, this study includes a complete section on the principles and treatment of diseases. Researched by a unique coterie of professionals: an M.D., a psychoanalyst, and a respected clairvoyant whose combined input permits a view of the *whole* man: physical, mental, spiritual. For health in its fullest sense, suggest the authors, means the alignment of the *whole* of one's being. Diagnosis can be more accurate, the cure more effective if consideration is given to the effect PLUS the CAUSE of the disease. One of many examples: "The liver is affected by criticism, resentment, aggression, and irritability. The 'peace at any price' person frequently develops liver trouble." 209p. $3.25. *(Please add .60 for postage & handling)*

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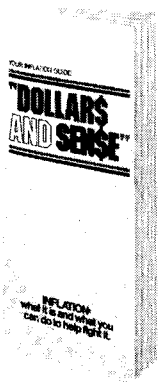

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borrow a gown to be presented to the sumptuous Russian court in 1744, became its Empress and one of the most powerful and myth-provoking monarchs of all time. Exotic stories about her sex life circulate to this day, and her prodigal way with money has always defied invention.

To capture this Russian meteor, the ideal biographer would have to be three persons in one: a scholar of French and Russian; a historian who understands the moods of a people in a vast and mystic land; a novelist who sees the connecting webs of civility, piety, and violence in Catherine's being and in her schemes for the powerful Russian empire whose destiny always prevailed over her feelings for her mother and husband, her sons and lovers.

These are a few of the talents of the distinguished Henri Troyat, whose biography of Catherine appeared in France in 1977 and is now ours in Joan Pinkham's excellent translation. If anyone can find a volume that surpasses this definitive life, he deserves the billion and a half dollars that Her Imperial Highness lavished on all her lovers throughout the many years of her reign. —JOHN FLUDAS

Ghost Waltz: A Memoir
by Ingeborg Day
The Viking Press, 240 pp., $11.95

GHOSTS PERVADE Ingeborg Day's memoir, chilling her recollections of her Austrian childhood and unsettling her present life. The ghosts are the figures of her parents, and the chill comes from her realization that she continues to "hopelessly love two people who belonged to that party, that movement, that sightless, soulless Moloch that ingested the Six Million." Her father was a member of the Nazi party for over 20 years and an SS man for seven. Until she was an exchange student in the United States at age 16, Ingeborg knew nothing about the holocaust. A year after her return to Austria she renounced her parents' anti-Semitism, married an American, and emigrated. At age 38 she is still struggling to reconcile her horror of Nazism with her adoration of her father.

Ghost Waltz is a reflection on the pathology of racism, on the meaning of nationalism, personal morality, and unshakable family ties. This graceful, intelligent mosaic of Ingeborg Day's heritage should not be dismissed as yet another example of what Day calls "Hitler-market fodder." She has carefully pieced together vivid childhood scenes (of a war she didn't understand and of later moments of domestic tranquillity she didn't question), Austrian parables, and snippets of information about her parents' lives and Austrian history. In only a few instances does her painful questioning about guilt through implication become self-indulgent and overwrought. She has followed, with a glimmer of irony, the advice she received as a schoolgirl on a composition: "Do not exaggerate, the truth suffices."

—DOROTHY WICKENDON

Swanson on Swanson
by Gloria Swanson
Random House, 512 pp., $15.95

"IF GLORIA WERE 35 instead of 25, she could run for president," remarked the young Miss Swanson's friend and director Allan Dwan, observing her triumphal cross-country journey in 1925. She had just left a $1,000-a-day job to produce and star in *Madame Sans Gene*, an internationally successful film. How wise to begin this chronicle of her life at the moment when fame peaked and fate turned cruel. How unfortunate that we must then be led through an extended flashback beginning at birth.

After age 25, Swanson's career went sour: A disastrous liaison with Joe Kennedy cost her valuable time and money, her marriages failed, serious production mistakes halted her attempt to make pictures under the United Artists label. But the woman herself was tempered in the fire. She turned from a naive little clotheshorse into a

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shrewd, hard-bargaining executive whose devastating assessment of motion-picture politics will destroy whatever illusions one might have had about how movies are made and how they are financed.

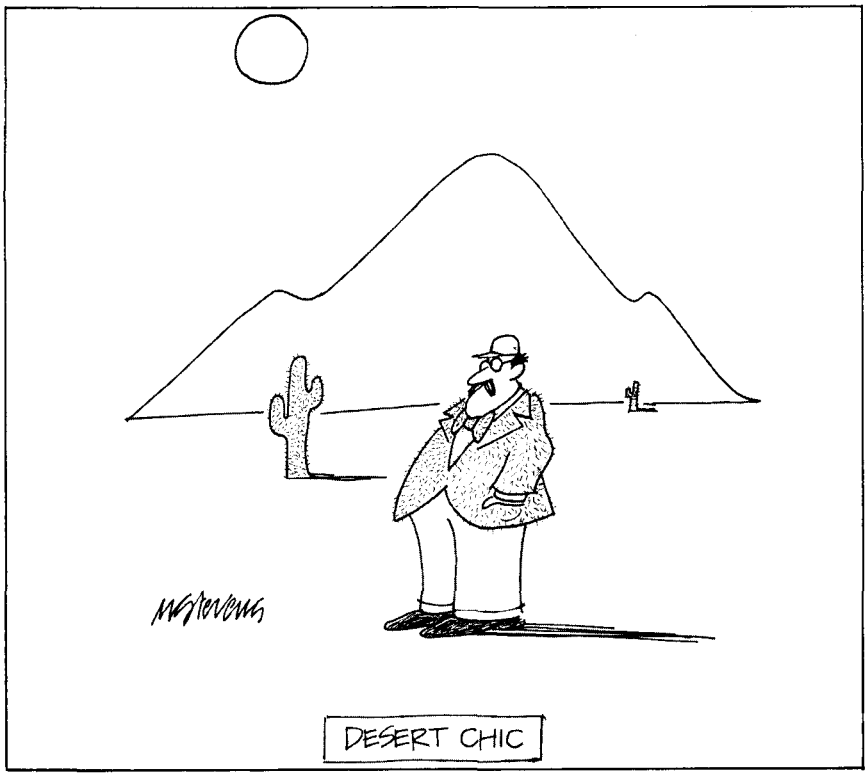
But several flaws mar this fascinating, gossipy account of Hollywood's early years. Chief among them is Swanson's youthful innocence, which obliges one to endure endless pages on the clothes she wore and the kisses she turned down. When the woman matures, the story acquires some depth. It then becomes a chronicle of failure and the strength of character that allowed her to remain indifferent to fame's demise. —KAY LARSON

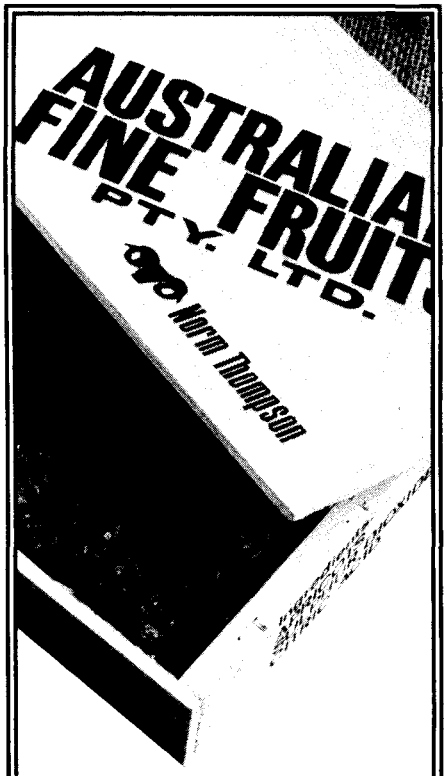
Another Almanac of Words at Play
by Willard R. Espy
Clarkson N. Potter
384 pp., $15.95 (cloth), $8.95 (paper)

THIS IS A pick-up-at-random kind of book, an omnium gatherum, arranged in true almanac fashion, with an entry for each day of the year. The items range in length from a few sentences to a page. Verses, puns, anagrams, palindromes, insults—everything to do with the joys and oddities of language.

The best way to give the flavor is to quote. Here's a palindrome—a backwards-forwards sentence—new to me: "Eros? Sidney, my end is sore!" The vagaries of punctuation show in "The butler stood by the door and called the guests' names as they arrived," becomes quite aggressive with a dropped apostrophe, "The butler stood by the door and called the guests names as they arrived." Under "Insults" we have a fine Gypsy Rose Lee crack: She said of a pretentious chorus girl that "she is descended from a long line that her mother listened to." Under "Aphorisms," Mr. Espy attributes to "Author unknown" the witticism "When women kiss it always reminds me of prizefighters shaking hands." Uh uh. It's H.L. Mencken.

A delightful book for sipping, dipping, or swilling, with a lot of light verse





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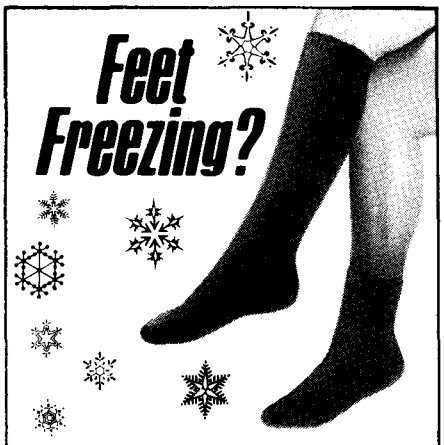

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BOOK BRIEFS

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—WILLIAM COLE

The Viceroy of Ouidah
by Bruce Chatwin
Summit Books, 192 pp., $10.95

IN *THE VICEROY OF OUIDAH,* Bruce Chatwin follows Francisco Manoel da Silva from his impoverished Brazilian boyhood to the Slave Coast of Africa, where in the early 1800s he becomes blood brother to the King of Dahomey. In return for guns, Da Silva is given the title of viceroy and a monopoly over the sale of slaves. Dahomey is seductive but bloody, and Da Silva, even as he sinks into African superstitions, dreams of returning in triumph to Bahia. Instead he is betrayed by the king, by his Brazilian friends, by his African wife, and, stripped of his wealth, he dies mad.

The story is based in fact, but Chatwin has changed the names, fictionalized his history, and ended with a hybrid. The part that is travelogue works well, with a profusion of local color that triumphs over character and images that graft an English sensibility onto an exotic setting: A priest stands "swivelling his luminous bronze head with the authority of a gun-turret." But in the realm of the novel, when Chatwin tries to imagine Da Silva's life, he strains for a serio-comic, mythic quality. The hard and lean prose of his first book, *In Patagonia,* here becomes arch and pretentious. The sane and skeptical voice of the traveler has been lost in the African miasma. – RONALD NEVANS

Saul Bellow, Drumlin Woodchuck
by Mark Harris
University of Georgia Press
184 pp., $9.95

"THIS BOOK," Mark Harris wrote to Saul Bellow, trying to describe what went on to become this very memoir, "is going to be interesting, reliable, unique, kind, loving, appreciative, sound, intelligent, and artistic .... It will not be a work at your expense. It will be as affectionate a book as anybody ever critically wrote about a friend or fellow author ...."

Readers—excepting Bellow—will agree. What's not in this account of Harris's ploys over many years to write a biography of his friend and fellow novelist are the hard facts of Bellow's life. Instead, we have a rich charcoal sketch of Bellow's prickly personality, something of his marriages and love affairs, his writing and teaching methods, joustings on the lecture circuit, and much of his horror of his work being minced by literary professionals for their journals and students. The celebrated author of *Herzog* and *Humboldt's Gift* detests book and articles about himself, never reads them, apparently feeling that if he does, he can't, or he won't be free while writing future works, but rather will be responding to what the mincers expect of him.

So, even with Harris, he hides in his burrows like a woodchuck, always with a spare hole to escape into or from. He's shaken when Harris suggests becoming his Boswell, and ever since has felt Harris's thumbs on his windpipe. In no way has he contributed to this book about himself. In his novels, he says, he has already exposed himself more shatteringly than any biographer could hope to reveal him. "Biography," he tells Harris when a part of *Saul Bellow, Drumlin Woodchuck* appears in *The Georgia Review,* "is a spectre viewed by a spectre." He was very unhappy with it, and snapped impatiently, "I thought I looked like a turd in it .... Bad-tempered. Nasty. Snappish. I don't see myself that way." Backbreakingly honest, grimly funny, written in a dry, spare prose, this is a superb little anthology of candid snaps that should send readers back to Bellow's best works with eager heart.

—DONALD NEWLOVE

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Thomas H. Middleton

"Chairperson" Unseated

Madame Chairperson! Madame Chairperson! Madame Chairperson!" That, interlarded with an occasional "Madame Chair!" was to my mind perhaps the most depressing element of a generally depressing Democratic convention. I thought, "My God! Are we really going to be stuck with *this*? Is *chairperson* going to be one of the legacies of modern feminism?"

It looked very much that way; so I was delighted to get about a dozen letters deploring the term *chairperson* —all of them from women. A few contained clippings of letters and articles telling how in all their committee meetings these women will insist that the chairman be called the chairman; others echoed the old plaint, "Isn't there something we can do?" Almost all the letters pointed out that *chairman* is a position and not a gender.

Normally, there *isn't* much we can do about linguistic change, but in this case I think we've got a fighting chance. For one thing, *Madame Chairman* has a lot going for it. It has a long tradition, it is euphonious, and it has flair. There is no doubt that the word *chairman* has a whisper of masculinity to it. There is more masculinity inherent in *chairman* than there is in, for instance, *woman.* Nevertheless, I don't recall a time when I, or anyone of my acquaintance, ever thought that there was anything incompatible between chairman and woman. We've always known that women could be chairmen and chairmen, women.

I have a particular liking for the phrase *Madame Chairman.* I think one reason is that blend of the very definitely feminine *Madame* with the shadow of masculinity in *Chairman.* The phrase has a quality of yin-and-yang, the contrast-in-one of both masculine and feminine. Another of its charms lies in the faintly Gallic suggestion of *Madame.* While *Mister Chairman* is businesslike, *Madame Chairman* is both businesslike and elegant. In contrast, *Madame Chairperson* wallows clumsily in amorphous ooze and *Madame Chair* is a broken stick.

I am constantly made aware of what extraordinary women it has been my good fortune to know throughout my life. To begin with, my mother was very active in social and political movements. It was she who convinced me that the League of Women Voters was an absolutely first-rate guide if ever I was undecided on an issue. She was the chairman of several committees during her time in the league. My younger sister became a political activist at the age of eight, when she was a hard-working, dedicated supporter of FDR. Since that time she has been deeply involved in everything from Fight for Freedom and Russian War Relief through today's No-Nuke campaigns. My sister took her daughter, Elizabeth, at age three, with her on an Aldermaston Ban-the-Bomb march in England, and Elizabeth has been a political fireball ever since.

Madame Chairman has a yin-and-yang blend of masculine and feminine.

In addition, my wife, sundry female cousins, and a great many of the girl friends and woman friends and lady loves I've known from my infancy to the present have held countless chairmanships, and not one of them has suffered psychological damage through being referred to as a chairman; nor, as far as I know, has any one of them felt a loss of identity due to the use of masculine pronouns. If, at the age of three, my sister had been told, "Sooner or later, everybody will get his just deserts," it wouldn't have occurred to her even fleetingly that "his" included me but not her. In fact, it is an absolute cinch that she'd have thought *deserts* meant *desserts*, and there's just *no way* that *that* wouldn't have included her.

From what I've heard and read in the media, most women have been made to feel like non-persons because of the use of masculine pronouns and words like *chairman* and *spokesman.* I've really been surprised to learn about this. Thanks to nothing more than dumb luck, I've been blessed with women in my family and my circle of friends who've known just who they were and how to get where they were going, and their psyches have come through strong and defiant, totally unaware of the linguistic buffeting they were apparently subjected to.

Having retired, at least temporarily, from the world of committees, I haven't been chairman of anything for years, and I may never again be a chairman. But it's a sure bet that my sister, my niece, my wife, and sundry female cousins and friends will go on to more and more chairmanships and more and more amazing deeds. And they'll all insist upon being referred to as *Madame Chairman,* a title of great tradition and dignity that goes well and smoothly with extraordinary women.

When you get right down to it, I suppose persons who want to be called "Madame Chairperson" or "Mister Chairperson" probably deserve to be called "Madame Chairperson" or "Mister Chairperson." ■

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FILM

Judith Crist

Three Provocative Gambles

At this annually off-movie moment—between leftover summer entertainments and still-to-come year-end blockbusters—we are in the hands of the filmmaker as risk-taker, a relatively rare situation that makes movie-going an adventure. Richard Rush's movie about movie-making that isn't about movie-making; Lewis John Carlino's serious consideration of nonfaith healing; Jean-Luc Godard's return to narrative film—win or lose, the gambles are provocative.

Rush has gambled and won with **The Stunt Man** (Twentieth Century-Fox), adapted by the producer-director, with screenplay by Lawrence B. Marcus, from Paul Brodeur's 1970 novel. A movie-movie melange of action and ideas, it provides an absorbing entertainment and as many metaphors as you want to cope with, all in glittering cinematic style. It's game-playing of the first order, as shrewd as it is surface-simplistic, a send-up of reality and a blow-up of illusions. Above all, it is a joyous and very funny celebration of movie magic: "If God could do the tricks we can do, He'd be a happy man," the director of Rush's movie-within-the-movie notes.

The stunt man of the title is a fugitive, a Vietnam veteran on the run from the police, who stumbles into a movie location. The director offers him a risky refuge: take on the identity of a stunt man who has just been killed and his job as double for the star who's playing an American aviator on the run in Germany during World War I. The fugitive is willing: "I got out of Nam in one piece—that's a great stunt," he boasts.

But stunts are based on an absurd—or existential—mix of reality and illusion and not even the stunt man is told where one ends and the other begins. No need for fear, the director assures him. "Just remember King Kong the First was only three feet six inches tall and barely came up to Fay Wray's bellybutton." Nothing is what it seems, for us or for the stunt man, from rooftop chases to bloodied corpses to sudden romance and even attempted murder amid 41 flavors of ice cream. Our "truths" dissolve into misconception, misjudgment, and a pratfall.

Is the director—Peter O'Toole in top megalomanic form, a lazy sophistication and weary wit misguiding us—an artist or a maniac? Is the stunt man—Steve Railsback, part naif, part "grunt"—a born loser or merely a run-of-the-mill paranoid? Is the leading lady—Barbara Hershey, a charming mix of ego and innocence—all actress or part woman? Is O'Toole a God figure? Are we in allegory and is it Message Time?

Ellen Burstyn stars in perhaps the most fully realized of her screen creations.

The potential for pretentiousness is enormous but Rush skirts it adroitly, with an almost nonstop succession of complicated action sequences (deliciously underlined by Dominic Frontiere's Saturday-afternoon-serial score) and deftly satirical behind-the-scenes bits and pieces about movie-making. Allen Goorwitz's writer, Sharon Farrell's hairdresser, Adam Roarke's star, Chuck Bail's top stunt man are all lagniappes. With O'Toole in glittering command on screen, Rush is exulting in his craft as only a master craftsman can be—and the devil (or the nudnik) can take the hindmost metaphor.

Fresh from his brilliant adaptation of *The Great Santini*, Lewis John Carlino has written an original screenplay for **Resurrection** (Universal), thereby providing Ellen Burstyn with the most complex and perhaps most fully realized of her screen creation. Together, with Dan Petrie as director, they have provided us with an understanding and compassionate view of a woman with a gift for natural healing. Their triumph is in making the gift seem "natural," in dealing simply and forthrightly with a subject that most of us approach with prejudice and preconception. That Burstyn makes the supernatural not merely credible but acceptable is her masterstroke.

A Los Angeles car accident, in which her husband is killed and in which she herself has "brushed" death, leaves Edna McCauley (Burstyn) crippled; returning to her native Kansas to recuperate, she discovers, almost by accident, that she can stop bleeding by a laying on of hands. Herself a skeptic, she decides to cure her own paralysis and does so, seemingly by sheer will power. Her grandmother insists that she must share her gift—and it is with the reactions that go beyond the farming community that the film is concerned.

It is a duality—of sharing suffering, of extending love—that enables her to heal, Edna declares, and she will not yield to the local hell-and-damnation preacher's insistence that she credit faith. The preacher's renegade son has become her lover but even he feels she "had best dust off [her] Bible" and credit Scriptures. Pressures for a rational or scientific or religious explanation grow and lead to a violent climax.

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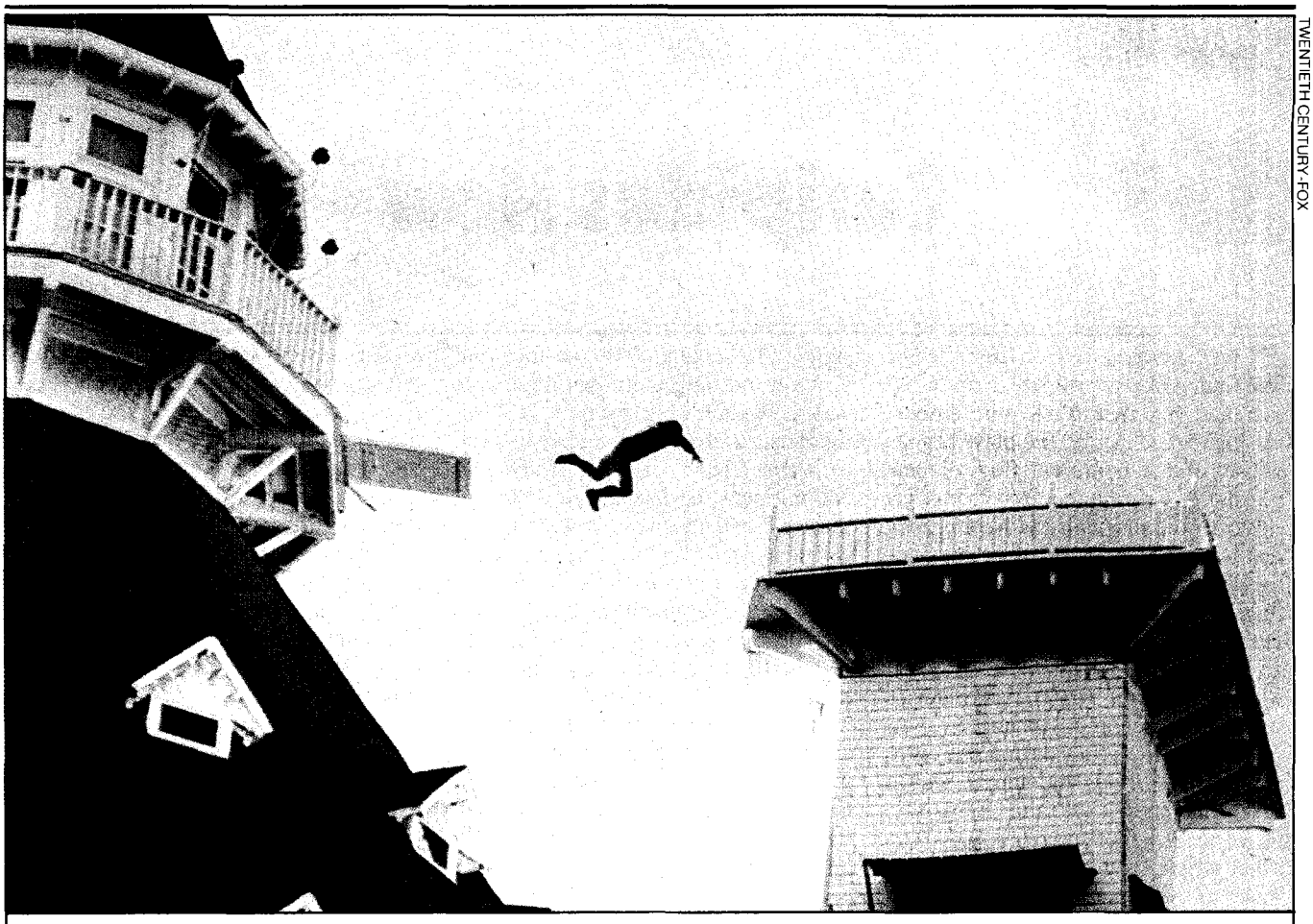

TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

Steve Railsback jumps in Richard Rush's *The Stunt Man.* "If God could do the tricks we do, He'd be a happy man."

"Joan of Arc was burned for hearing voices," Edna remarks. "I was almost killed for not. Seems you can't win for losing." Edna resolves her life by loving.

Burstyn carries off the Christlike role by making her healer a complete woman, simple, forthright, and sensual, without claim to virture or intellectual pretension. it is the plainness of her characterization, a crystal clarity of self-comprehension, that provides a quintessential credibility to her role.

Carlino's is a plain-spoken and straight-lined script, given American Gothic overtones by Petrie's uncomplicated approach and Mario Tosi's stark cinematography. The supporting cast is excellent, with Sam Shepard powerful as the man who cannot escape his fundamentalist roots, Eva Le Gallienne glowing as the loving grandmother, and Roberts Blossom unyielding as Edna's unforgiving father. Not least of *Resurrection's* accomplishments is that it makes an exploration of "goodness" engrossing and exhilarating.

Jean-Luc Godard, who had devoted himself to video films for the past seven years, has returned to narrative forms with **Every Man for Himself** (New Yorker Films.) Sad to report that in that form he has added little to his old repertoire of technical tricks beyond a frequent and ultimately irritating stop-motion effect used to no obvious purpose. Nor has he added any sophistication to the political and social naivete that marked his polemical films of a dozen or so years ago.

The Anne Marie Mieville/Jean-Claude Carriere screenplay involves three people whose paths cross and diverge. The nonhero, named Godard and played by Jacques Dutronc, a television producer, is in process of being left by his lover, Denise, played by Nathalie Baye, who is leaving her television job too in search of a quiet country life and a writing career (she scribbles sententious cliches and banalities in a notebook while smoking lots of cigarettes). Godard tries unsuccessfully for reconciliation with her and then with his wife and daughter with whom he trades insults. The connecting link is Isabelle, played by Isabelle Huppert, a prostitute who spends a night with Godard and later, coincidentally, rents Denise's apartment.

Most of the film is concerned with Isabelle and a detailed consideration of her work and clientele, all of whom seem to be business executives who consummate important deals on the phone while indulging in kinky sexual activities with prostitutes. This typifies the level of Godard's social commentary—and a tedious one it is. Huppert is deadpan throughout. Understandably.

Judith Crist's review of Woody Allen's new film, Stardust Memories, *will appear in December.* ■

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THEATER

Stanley Kauffmann

Euripides Now

Greek tragedy lies on our theater today like an outsize mantle, so rich and big that it's a mite embarrassing. As literature, the plays beggar praise; and a continual flow of new translations simultaneously brings us closer to the originals (as we are told) and brings them closer to our imaginative embrace (as we can see). But on stage, if they are to accomplish the very same ends, they present problems of accommodation. Our theater, faced with these titanic works, has to devise strategies to encompass them.

Shakespeare's tragedies try the outer edge of our brains and spirits, and in that trial they exalt our humanity. Greek tragedies seem, to *reside* on those outer edges; they exist in the territory that a *Hamlet* or *King Lear* must travel to. This is not to pronounce that the Greek plays are greater than Shakespeare's—which isn't an opinion one tosses off en passant. But Shakespeare's tragedies live within conventions of society and theater much nearer to our own. With the Greek plays, if they are to bless us as they can, we must mediate, not through reduction but through awareness that the community of which these plays are emblems no longer exists and that compensations must be found by a theater that is not truly emblematic of any comparable whole community.

Michael Cacoyannis, the Greek-born and British-trained director, is well aware of this need for strategies, and he fills that need. I'm not speaking here of his films of the tragedies but of his stage productions that I've seen: *The Trojan Women* (1963) and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1967), both at New York's downtown Circle in the Square, and now a third Euripides work, **The Bacchae**, at the uptown Circle in the Square. The Cacoyannis strategy is simple. He begins with the fact that virtually nothing is known about the way these plays were first done or about the music and dance that were integral to them. Then, out of study and commitment, he *invents* an Athenian theater that is internally consistent, that is just stylized enough to seem ancient and strange but not so far off that the plays seem like unwrapped sarcophagi —a theater exalted in tonality yet close enough so that our actors can operate in it and we can comprehend.

Other strategies work differently, in some ways more effectively. Since Cacoyannis's earlier direction, the best Greek productions I've seen were *Medea*, *Electra*, and *The Trojan Women*, done at La Mama by Andrei Serban with music by Elizabeth Swados. Over several years I saw each play eight times and would go again tonight if I could. The Serban-Swados strategy was, essentially, not to perform the plays but to perform the myths on which the plays were based and which were very old when the plays were written. The cast spoke no English, mostly Greek with some Latin, so that we concentrated on massive sculptural ideas, visual and emotional, not on character or nuance.

Director Michael Cacoyannis's sense of how to "place" a Greek play puts us in his debt.

The Cacoyannis strategy doesn't come near the immensity of Serban-Swados, but he gives us much greater refinement of detail. And it's helpful in *The Bacchae*, this terrible tragedy of a city's denial of a god and that god's revenge. Because the city of Thebes refuses to recognize the divinity of Dionysus (or Bacchus), the god entices the women of Thebes—led by Agave, the king's mother—into revels on a nearby mountain. When the king, Pentheus, tries to imprison Dionysus as a fraudulent intruder, the god tricks Pentheus into dressing as a woman so that he can spy on the women's revels. The women discover the spy and, in their ecstasy, rend him to pieces. Agave, still ecstatic, comes back to Thebes bearing the head of her own son, which she thinks is a lion's head. At last the Bacchic frenzy leaves her, and she realizes what has happened. Relentless, Dionysus proclaims that his punishment of her and her son is just.

Now, since Dionysus/Bacchus is the god of wine and love and joy, it would be easy to treat the play as a pat Freudian analogy—the body's revenge for the denial of the body. Certainly that truth is included, along with other truths, but Cacoyannis sees *The Bacchae* as a classic drama of those truths to which Freud is a latter-day testimony.

As the first step toward bringing the play close while keeping it large, he has made a new translation, condensed but not synoptic. Sometimes it slips into the uneasy colloquial ("all dolled up"), but generally the language cuts in large-scale sweeps with a modern edge. The setting by John Conklin is a simple black-floor, for a stage surrounded by the audience, with entrances at the usual Circle apertures and with silver trapdoors in the center for the appearance of the god and the chorus of women—who are Bacchae (his devotees) from Asia. The lighting by Pat Collins underscores the Cacoyannis approach: It suggests grandeur yet it often lays in shadow and highlight to concentrate attention and almost to

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suggest cinematic focus.

The cast is mostly excellent. To get the worst over at once, that superb actress Irene Papas is disappointing as Agave. True, she has the most difficult part: one long scene at the end, in which she enters dionysically rapt holding her son's head, then has a dialogue with her anguished father (the admirable Philip Bosco), then comes slowly to her senses, and, after all that, must plumb and convey horror. This is one scene that needed more graduated lighting, more support with sound and music. Perhaps it was the lack of them that forced Papas to strain, to use the upper third of her voice so much. Still, knowing this wonderful woman's gifts, I can't believe that her performance won't come under firmer control.

For the rest, nothing but praise. Cacoyannis has continued his strategy by casting the Asian Bacchae mostly with black women. (The one white woman is not only egregious but the weakest of the group.) Their movement and speech fit sinuously their devotion to their god. And two young men, both new to New York, are extraordinary. John Noah Hertzler, as Pentheus, has resonance and poise. Pentheus is not a character in the modern sense: he is a statement, an attitude, until prurient curiosity undoes him. Hertzler seems to sense this, seems to bring with him a ground for his anger at Dionysus and works that anger through differing shades, so that we get a believable, blinkered young monarch.

Christopher Rich, the Dionysus, makes a stunning debut. Rich, one might say, is Cacoyannis's best strategy to connect us to the play, and he does it—has to do it—from Moment One. It opens "cold": Dionysus steps out, tells us that he is a god, that he is being mistreated, and that he is angry, and we must believe it all at once or you might as well scrap the rest of the play. To do it either in remote rhetoric or apologetic vernacular would kill it. Rich does neither; he is immediately vivid, golden, graceful, clear, commanding. He fixes in his body and in his reading the divine made visible and credible. It's all the more powerful because Rich suggests the mysterious androgyne, the lithe and sensuous feminine (not effeminate) combined with male force. No American actor other than Christopher Walken has that combination or shows such possibilities for a fine classical-modern career. Our theater being what it is, let us all cross our fingers for Rich.

But not before applauding Cacoyannis. His major moment—the Agave scene—is incompletely realized; but his discovery of Rich, his use of Hertzler and the others, his sense of how to "place" a Greek play for modern viewers, all put us in his debt.

A few years ago *Performing Arts Journal* invited Harold Clurman and me to converse about the theater for their tape recorder, and they published the result in their issue of Spring/Summer 1978. Harold died on September 9 last, at 78, after 56 years work as director, teacher, critic, and historian. Let him have the last word—he always did! An excerpt from what he said in our conversation: "I don't despair, I never despair. I complain, shout, fight, work, propagandize—through lectures, acting classes, reviews, articles, books. In brief, create the kind of world—in the theater, at least—I believe in. That's all any one of us can do. I hope many others will do the same." The memory of Harold will help. ■

© MARTHA SWOPE

Christopher Rich as Dionysus, with bacchantes: "He is immediately vivid, golden, graceful, clear, commanding."

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DANCE

Walter Terry

"Scheherazade" Revisited

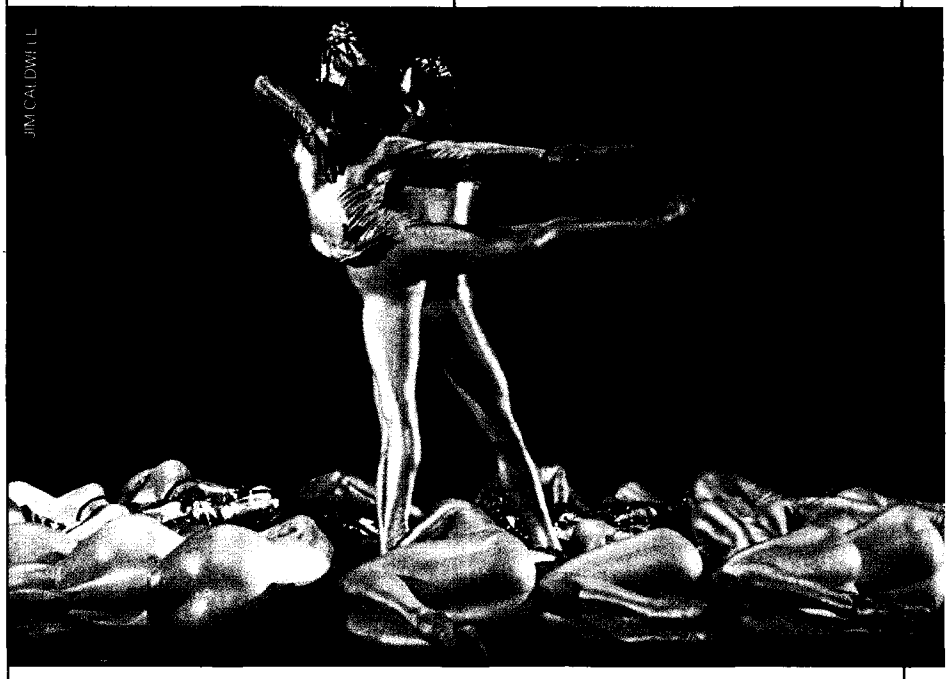
It was the exotic Ida Rubinstein who introduced sandaled sex into the world of classical ballet 70 years ago, and it was the deliciously impudent Renée Jeanmaire (known to her friends as Zizi) who gave America its first glimpse of *sexe sur les pointes* in 1949. Mme. Rubinstein, after a long and successful career centered in Paris, departed this world in 1960, but Michel Fokine's *Scheherazade*, in which she created the role of Zobeide (with Vaslav Nijinsky as her partner) for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes in 1910, and which was a staple of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's repertory from 1935 to 1955 during its innumerable U.S. tours, recently resurfaced in Houston, Texas. As for Jeanmaire, who had titillated us 31 years ago in Roland Petit's *Carmen*, danced with the Ballets de Paris, the indestructible Zizi returned to Broadway last August with the Ballet National de Marseille, also directed by her husband, Petit. Both *Scheherazade* and Zizi show signs of wear (Zizi far less than the former), but both temptresses remain formidable. (Give that a French pronunciation for Zizi!)

The Houston Ballet's *Scheherazade*, staged by Vassilie Trunoff after the original Fokine, employs the original scenery and costume designs of Leon Bakst and, of course, the famous Rimsky-Korsakov score. The book, by Alexandre Benois, with its harem setting full of concubines cavorting with handsome slaves upon liberally scattered cushions, was once the lure used by American wives to get their husbands to the ballet in the 1930s.

Zobeide, performed by Andrea Vodehnal opening night in Houston's Jones Hall, was handsome enough but the assignment is a slink-and-smolder role that the Texan ballerina caught only sporadically. Kenneth McCombie did well in the slink-slide-soar part of the Favorite Slave. The Houston Ballet's first-class corps scored nicely in this onetime favorite. It was not very exciting but then it never was, at least from the Thirties on when I saw it on endless occasions. It was a ballet of naughty anticipation but not of erotic realization. Why revive it? At least it's a charming curio from our ballet past.

Scheherazade doesn't pretend to be anything but pseudo-Oriental. But a genuine Oriental of major talent was Li Cunxin, the first ballet student to come to the United States from the People's Republic of China. He danced with the Houston Ballet's brilliant principal dancer, Suzanne Longley, in that great old razzle-dazzle showpiece, the pas de deux from Marius Petipa's *Le Corsaire*. Cunxin displayed the elevation, the command of multiple turns on the ground or in the air (he pulled off a series of six double *assemblés* as he circled the stage in these glittering aerial spins), and the balances on demi-pointe required of the male virtuoso.

The September program in Houston also featured the world premiere of artistic director Ben Stevenson's *Space City*, with a commissioned score by Robert Prince, scenery and lighting by Matthew C. Jacobs, and costumes by Ray Delle Robbins. A descendant of those "mechanical," or *mécanique* ballets of the Thirties, *Space City* finds the dancers in skin-tight metallic costumes (changing under shifting lights from silver to gold and back again) engaged in what could be described as cogs-and-gears choreography; the finale is an exuberant exposition of what looks to me like pre-Bob Fosse show-biz jazz of the Fifties. This is not



Vodehnal and McCombie slink and smolder in Houston's revival of *Scheherazade*.

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Stevenson, a highly gifted choreographer, at his most profound, poetic, or even witty, but it moves. And this I will say, if the large corps for the opening *mécanique* sections were tripled, the ballet would knock 'em dead at Radio City Music Hall.

For its September show, the Houston Ballet chose choreography that was not always of the best. Nevertheless, the company holds a secure position, in my opinion, as one of the 10 major ballet troupes in America.

Roland Petit founded the Ballet de Marseille only eight years ago, which makes it considerably younger than the 300-year-old Paris Opera Ballet. Yet Roland Petit, as artistic director, has given it every reason to merit its full, official title of **Ballet National de Marseille**, for it is not only national in status but international in stature. Petit, a product of the Paris Opera Ballet, left it to form the Ballets des Champs-Elysées, in 1945. Here he created *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort*, a ballet first danced by the great French virtuoso, Jean Babilée, later by Rudolf Nureyev, and more recently by Mikhail Baryshnikov. But even more important was his founding of the Ballets de Paris in 1948, the company that produced his sizzling ballet version of *Carmen*, which made Jeanmaire an international star not only in ballet, but in revues, musicals, movies, and TV.

Mlle. Zizi returned to New York with her husband's Marseille-based ballet late this summer in a four-week engagement. She appeared in only one (*The Bat*) of the three full-length ballet productions that Petit offered during the run. *The Bat*, with music of Johann Strauss and loosely based on the outlines of the operetta, *Die Fledermaus*, is stronger on staging and theater effects than on choreography.

Jeanmaire's entrance comes as something of a shock, for she is seen as a busy housewife catering to the needs of a family; an unbecoming red wig and a black dress make the remembered gamine-danseuse seem very middle-aged. But when our Zizi, disguised in order to win back her errant husband, reemerges with her shiny-slick, close-cropped, jet black hair, her trademark costume that reveals every lovely inch of leg from toe to hip top, and that wickedly crooked smile, all is well and Zizi is back, untouched by time.

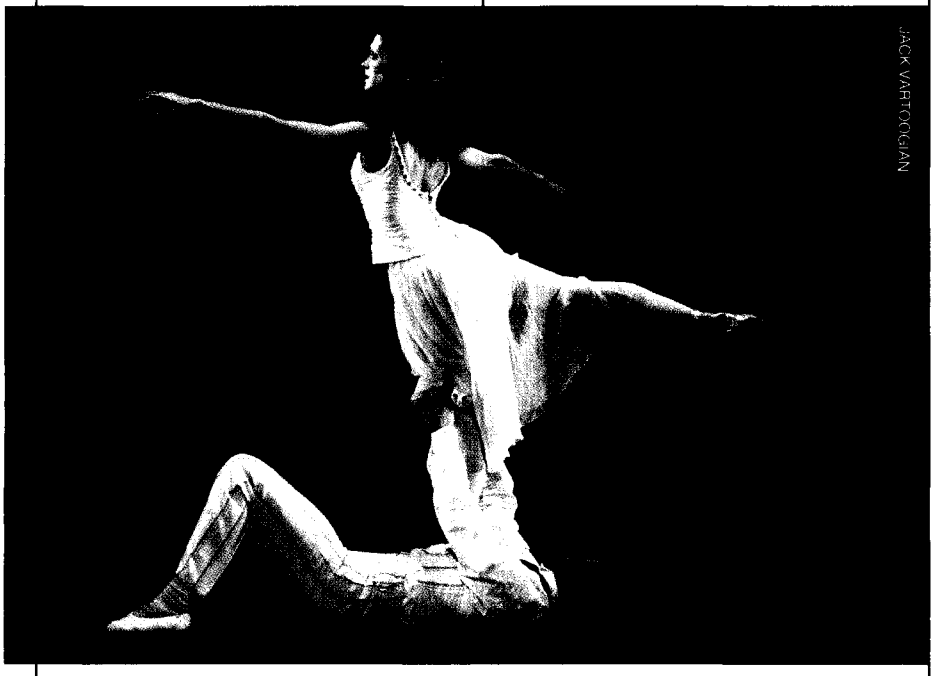
The star dances rather cautiously throughout the ballet in the bits and pieces Petit has designed for her. But there is a highpoint, and that is an extended adagio for Jeanmaire and an exciting dancer, Denys Ganio, in which an air of romance, of pleasurable body contacts suffuse the lifts and holds.

As choreographer, Petit revealed himself to far better advantage in an amusingly cynical updating of the old comedy classic *Coppelia* in which the heroine, Swanilda, was a brash cocotte rather than the traditional coquette. The closing section ran out of both wit and invention, but most of it was composed of hilarious moments of irreverent fun, with Dr. Coppelius as a lecherous dollmaker and with *amour* spilling around everywhere. There were also set dances that allowed Dominique Khalfouni, a sprightly and technically skillful ballerina, and Peter Schaufuss, one of the truly great ballet virtuosi of our day, to caper as Swanilda and Franz and to dazzle the viewers with Olympic feats of skill.

Petit's finest offering of the engagement was his *Marcel Proust Remembered*, a panorama of elegant decadence staged in two acts and 13 scenes. In this ballet of accumulated vignettes, Proust himself, or Proustian viewpoints, emerges from the various characters. The opening and closing tableaux of elegant guests caught up in empty rituals of snobbery framed such contrasting scenes as a brilliantly choreographed sado-masochistic dance, and a lovely dance of Elysian innocence in which a beautiful girl, nude from the waist up, is borne through exquisite patterns by cavaliers, their movement elusively silhouetted against the golden haze of a luminescent backdrop.

Schaufuss, as a male hustler, also had a brief nude scene, but both scenes were pertinent to the needs of the ballet, as innocent nudity was juxtaposed to the displaying of body wares for carnal commerce. The score was fashioned from the music of several composers (Saint-Saens, Fauré, Debussy, Wagner, and others), and the decors and costumes were by René Allio and Christine Laurent, respectively.

Proust was the most challenging and rewarding work presented by this first-class company of dancers-actors. Petit's corps merits further performances after its U.S. debut, not only in New York but in other American cities. ■



Denys Ganio and Dominique Khalfouni in Petit's *Marcel Proust Remembered.*

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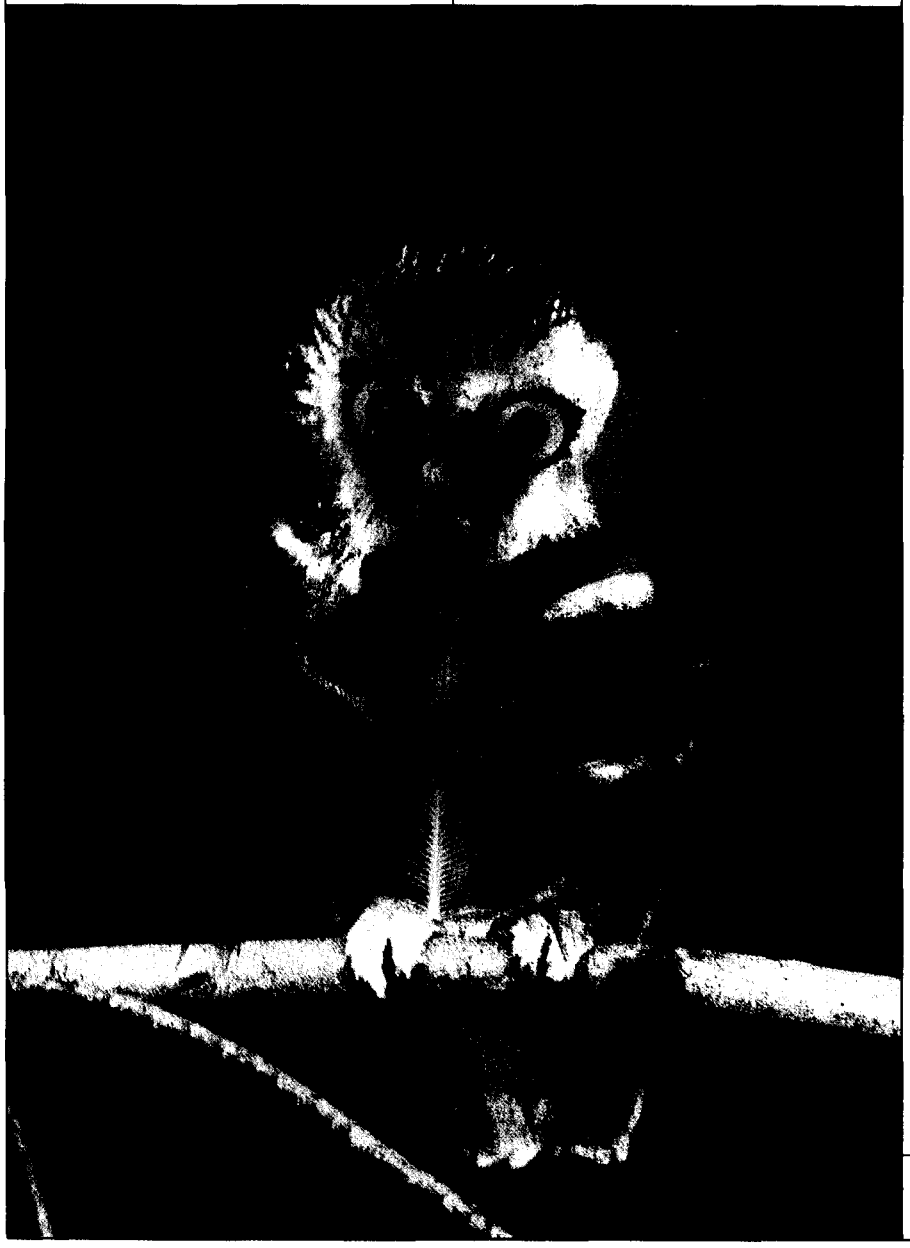
PHOTOGRAPHY

Owen Edwards

Purcell's Haunting Visions

In one way or another, the past tends to be imperious. It distracts us with nostalgic delusions while pushing us to act according to what we may believe were the expectations of our oppressive predecessors (to borrow a felicitous phrase from John Updike). We are told to learn from history or risk repeating it; good advice we try to follow, only to end up repeating it anyway. And for all its chimerical tricks, its unwelcome and sometimes pernicious effects, we end up treating the past not with anger or disdain, but with automatic reverence.



"Archimedes": Purcell's collages evoke entrapment—like sitting in an attic.

This paradoxical past haunts photography, a medium whose most widespread use has been to hold events in suspension for the benefit of future witnesses. In a sense, the invention of photography has made those living during the last century and a half contend with time and the past in a way that was never before necessary. Nothing essential has changed about life—we still grow old and die, we still cherish wistful longings for the unlined faces and uncompromised dreams of our youth. But now our memories follow us into old age, perfectly preserved, smiling, ever young. And when we die, our memories, intact and with a maddening verisimilitude, live on, however mysterious or inane they may seem to our survivors. Through the accumulation of photographs, each of us has his Acropolis, staring down from an age that inevitably seems purer and grander and never to be repeated.

Rosamund Purcell, a Boston photographer whose work was recently exhibited at the Marcuse Pfeiffer Gallery in New York (and whose book, *Half Life,* has just been published by David Godine), seems vividly aware of the awful burden of the past. In the main part of the show, Purcell, who uses Polaroid materials that allow her to build up to a final picture in the manner of a collagist, presented a group of spectacularly unnerving pictures that mixed elements of the past—old photographs for the

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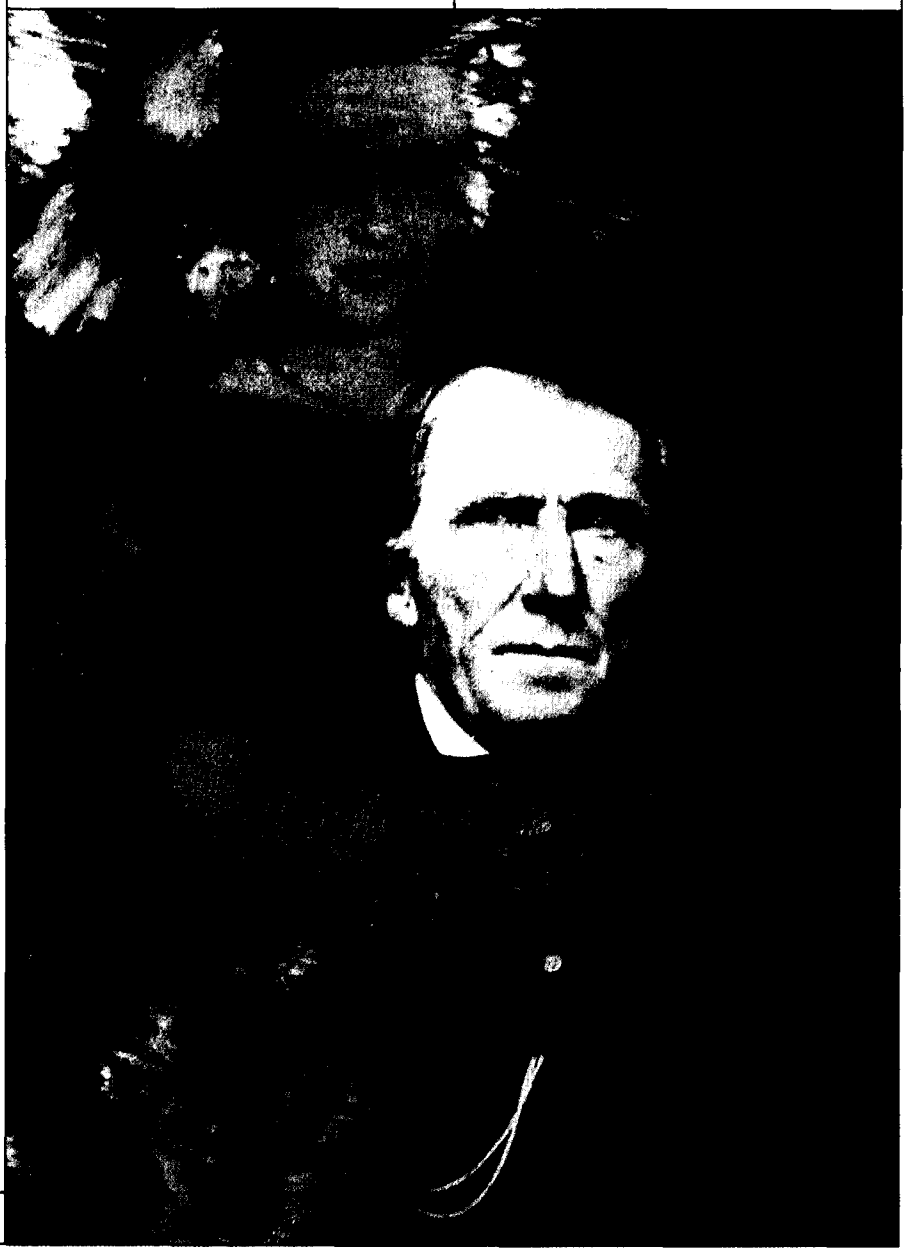
most part—with such oddities as stuffed owls, mounted butterflies, and roughly hewn human silhouettes.

The effect of Purcell's pictures is neither plangent nor nostalgic; it is, rather, claustrophobic. One might feel a similar sense of entrapment sitting in the attic of a distant aunt, poring over boxes of fading formal portraits, pictures of other aunts and uncles, cousins, friends, all long dead, staring forbiddingly up through the dust, stern, inescapable. The title that Purcell has chosen for her book seems particularly appropriate: Either the dour faces in the pictures are, to her, still half alive—or the power they retain, like that in a radioactive isotope, has a half-life that will carry its menace far into the future.

Sometimes Purcell's agon with the past takes on the outlandish hues and inexplicable forms of nightmare. Faces in old tintypes explode in bursts of blood red; women in funereal black, blurred beyond recognition, seem to sit in judgment like the fates. A human face stares from the body of a monkey, while decorously posed women become frightful creatures almost as we watch. In one of the most memorable of these odd, unsettling photographs, a stern, fatherly man looks balefully at the viewer, while behind him a young, beautiful woman, as translucent as a specter, herself half-transformed into a butterfly, places her arms around the man's neck: The collage poignantly embodies a daughter's fearful fantasy of her father's unknowable secrets, somehow left suspended in time for *her* daughter to see. Purcell strips the rote sentiment from the way we see the past and uncovers the true nature of its effect on us. Her iconoclastic message is that of an adroit historian/artist. The past is not benign, it exacts a tribute that will never be paid in full, and the more precisely it is remembered, the more relentless are its demands.

Unfortunately, Purcell's considerable originality and power dissipate when she leaves the realm of metaphor and depends on the more literal confines of photography alone. On her own terms—those of a storyteller and a surrealist—she breaks new ground, vastly improving on techniques (using photographs as a raw material) that have become familiar in the work of Rauschenberg, Warhol, and other painters. But as a photographer she is undistinguished, and a series of unmanipulated pictures of stuffed animals and museum skeletons, plus a handful of black-and-white images, dilute the effect of her metaphoric creations. As a result, the exhibition, and the book drawn from it, are uneven and occasionally even banal, when both might have expressed the sustained vision of an artist with a remarkably adventurous imagination.

What Rosamund Purcell is doing in creating her disturbing nightmare glimpses is a kind of photopainting, in which she abandons the athletic instincts of the photographer for the studied delectation of the painter. No doubt for someone who has started out as a photographer, this transition is not without self-doubt and the fear of treading unknown territory, both in her work and in herself. But Purcell is good enough at what she does well—even if that is an odd, ambiguous form—to forsake straight photography, which many others do better. ■



"The Other Woman": Odd, unsettling.

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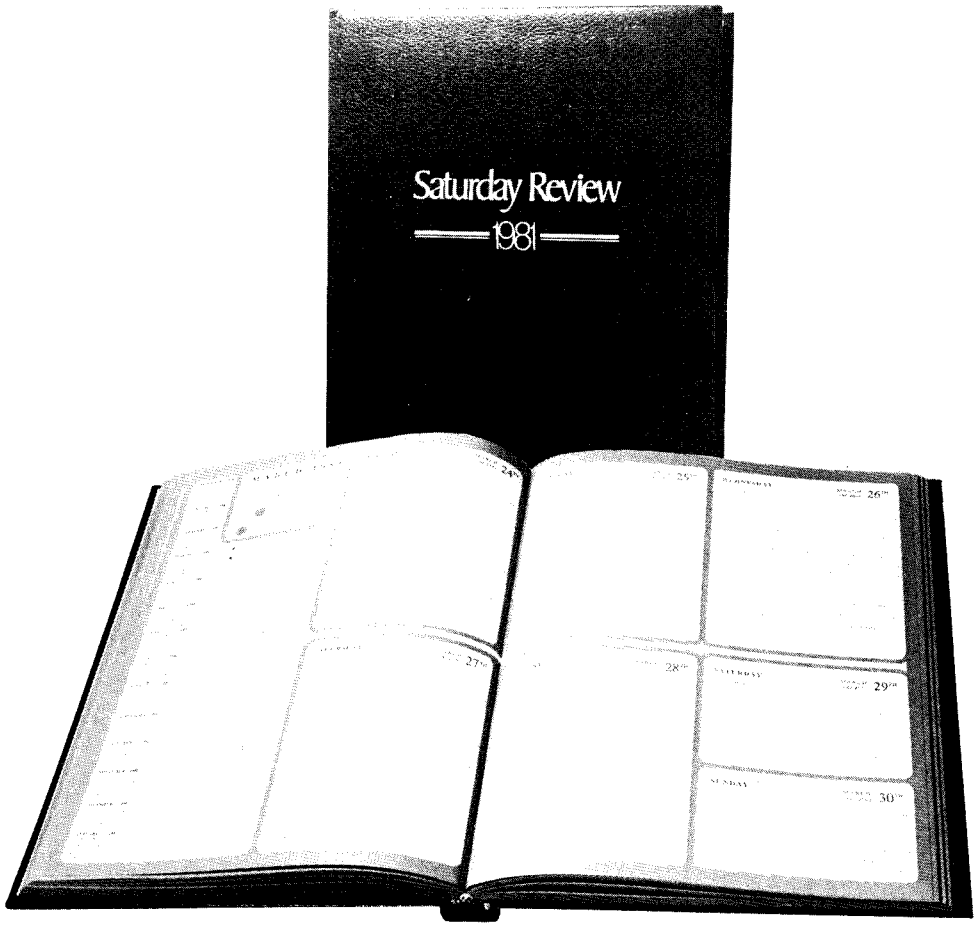

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Irving Kolodin

Acoustic Fog in Frisco

RON SCHERL

San Francisco's new symphony hall is a scientific success and an artistic flop.

Phrased in a few words, San Francisco's new Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall—which had its opening in mid-September—is a scientific success and an artistic flop. All the perimeters and parameters are in place as called for on the drawing board. But no amount of statistical support from graphs and curves can alter the yeses and noes that reverberated in my ears after a noisy, hardly musical opening concert. Yes, it is a great place for a rock concert; no, it is not yet a great place in which to hear a symphony orchestra.

Is it, then, a calamity peculiar to our coastal cities, East and West, whose dreams of brighter musical tomorrows for their symphony orchestras were acoustically clouded at the outset? Not really. In my judgment, there are all too many halls around the world that, to a lesser or greater degree, suffer from the same complaint.

This may be described as an advanced case of scientific know-it-all-itis. The fact is that the design and construction of concert halls in this country (and elsewhere) has become a highly competitive business. "Buyer beware" is now as appropriate a warning in this market as elsewhere. For the premises that become broken promises from acoustical engineers too often come to roost on those who have the least to do with them: the members of the symphony orchestras who have to spend their lives playing (working would be a better term) in the resulting oddities. No wonder they are always looking for more money: If I had to do it, I'd feel the same way.

What I do feel, in the immediate aftermath of the first concert in Davies Hall (which cost San Franciscans $27 million) is that too many cities have been talked into schemes of community grandeur which, somehow, don't turn out according to the hopes that have been vested in them—or the money that has been *in*vested in them. San Francisco, of all cities, deserves a concert hall that is a pleasure to contemplate and a fond memory to recall and revisit. But unless things change drastically, this is one part of San Francisco to which I have not lost my heart.

To be sure, the glass palace at the corner of Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street is a brilliant adornment of the Civic Center, especially the architectural concept of a transparent "skin" or glass surface, shutting out street noise but revealing a lively interior. This gives

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those on the outside a vista of activity within, amid a tasty range of colors that complements the hall's basic hue, described as a "dusty rose," in its carpets and other textured materials.

However, even a beehive is designed to fulfill a function, and what happens within the beehive of Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall does not please the ear (certainly not my two). Have you ever heard the "subdued hush" that precedes the beginning of a symphony concert as the lights go down and the music is about to come up? In Davies Hall there is no such thing as a subdued hush. The conversation of the audience is high-pitched, induced, no doubt, by the vast space rising to the ceiling (the outside "dome"), from which hang acrylic panels designed to reflect the sound of the orchestra, by the lack of carpeting under the seats, and by the acres of cream-colored walls. The only wood in the hall surrounds the orchestra and covers the floor.

The opening concert, conducted by the resident music director Edo de Waart, with Rudolf Serkin as piano soloist, began with a performance of Hector Berlioz's *Roman Carnival Overture* played with dash and brilliance. But the interior of the hall did not enhance the sounds the players were producing. Brass was overly prominent, and strings were wiry (all string instruments now use wire strings to some extent, but a proper hall should offset the metallic resonance rather than intensify it).

Happy Voices, commissioned for the occasion from David Del Tredici (the gifted composer of *Final Alice*, derived from Lewis Carroll), provided what could be called "a hall of a piece." Brittle, explosive, full of bright sonorities and interrelated voices, it gave the acrylic panels and the beige velour banners suspended from the ceilings a full-dress workout. *Happy Voices*, in short, is full of cymbalism, proving that brass conquers all, especially strings. At the end, there was an unexpected moment of invention, in which the whooshes from a wind machine were punctuated by sighs from a soprano placed high in the hall. As the voice belonged to Judith Blegen, one could only regret that Del Tredici hadn't provided more for her to do.

Following the intermission, Serkin appeared to a standing reception from the audience and performed the G minor piano concerto of Mendelssohn, to which he has almost as much title as the composer. This was pure Serkin, in every intellectual sense: high-spirited, reflective, evocative of an era as well as of a man. But there were tonal impurities: The piano sound was dull, lacking vibrance or "ping" in the finale. Surely there must be a better Steinway in San Francisco than the one on which Serkin performed. The strings lacked vibrato where I was seated (O 28, directly in the middle of the hall), though it was apparent to the eye that left hands were fluttering (to produce vibrato) as usual. De Waart, a methodical rather than a dynamic conductor, brought the concert to an end (if not a climax) with the C minor symphony of Beethoven.

Like the backers of Boettcher Hall in Denver, designed by another acoustician to provide a "surround hall" unlike any other in the United States, San Francisco's sponsors were attracted to the idea of a multipurpose hall in which "sails" (banners and panels) could be trimmed for any kind of tonal journey. At one point during a rehearsal some hours before the concert, I took a seat at the rear of the lower level (which has a steep rise) under the overhang of the boxes above. Here the sound was considerably closer to a proper balance of components, suggesting that it profited from the reflecting surfaces above and behind me. But such surfaces could hardly be provided generally.

Perhaps the conformations of Louise M. Davies Symphony Hall can be altered with trial and patience. But at this point, the hall provides no inclination to invoke such words as warmth, vibrance, color, iridescent timbre. If these are not what music is all about, what is? ■

"Stop worrying about inflation. There's nothing you can do about it. That'll be sixty dollars."

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HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Peter Caranicas

"Home Movies" on Tape

A generation ago television replaced the movies as the primary source of entertainment in the U.S. A similar shift now seems to occur as home movies give way to the advance of home video technology. This popular new pastime may soon become known as "home tapies."

The rise of home movies paralleled the rise of the silver screen. People started making them when the first 16-mm camera was introduced in 1923, and the activity grew even more popular after 8 mm emerged in the early Thirties. Sound and color followed. Super 8, a variation of 8-mm technology first marketed in the mid-Sixties, dominates home moviemaking today. Perhaps 5 million U.S. households now enjoy filming family fun and recording milestones.

But for all its rewards, Super 8 home filmmaking has two major drawbacks, both of which have been overcome by video technology. The first is the film price. Depending on shooting speed (18 or 24 frames per second) and the stock supplier, an hour's worth of Super 8 film can cost up to $200, with processing adding as much as $100 to that figure. Videocassettes, by contrast, give four hours' worth of programming for about $20.

Another advantage of video is convenience. Videocassettes require no processing and can be played back over the TV set the instant after they're shot. What's more, they can be erased and reused endlessly.

So why hasn't home video, which was introduced in 1975, already overtaken Super 8 in the making of home movies? For two reasons. The first is equipment cost. While a color video camera costs about as much as the more expensive Super 8 cameras (about $1,000), the camera alone is not enough. Whatever it shoots must be recorded on a second component called a VCR, which adds another $1,000 to $1,600 to the production package. Second, VCRs of the present generation are simply too heavy to carry around like a Super 8 camera. Even the battery-powered so-called portable models weigh 11 or more pounds, which, together with a separate camera, is a lot of luggage for the movie-minded backpacker or father taping a family picnic to haul about.

But Super 8's sanctuary is about to be assailed by a new generation of VCRs that are lighter and smaller than the existing Beta and VHS models. The first of these, a seven-pound recorder manufactured by Funai of Japan and distributed in the U.S. by Technicolor (the same folks who process many color movies), is now making its appearance in electronics and camera stores. For a list price of $995, the buyer gets the smallest VCR yet. It uses quarter-inch-wide tape in a 20-minute videocassette about the size of a standard audiocassette. The Technicolor-Funai system still lacks the portability of Super 8 and requires separate camera and recorder units, but, says Mark Schubin, a technical consultant to Lincoln Center in New York City, who keeps a close eye on the state of things, "It may well be the precursor of a whole new slew of formats designed for portable use."

The popularity of Super 8 home movies is about to be challenged by lighter, smaller, less expensive videocassette recorders.

Future VCRs of the "new slew" will probably resemble the Video Movie system previewed by Sony last July. This is the first video system ever publicly demonstrated that combines camera and VCR in a single unit. The whole package weighs a mere four pounds, six ounces. The tiny cassette uses (ironically) 8-mm-wide tape that runs for 20 minutes. The unit's extreme portability is made possible by a technology known as CCD (or charge-coupled device) that permits a high degree of miniaturization in the camera. Sony says the machine will cost less than $1,000, but won't be commercially available until 1985.

How is the Super 8 community responding to these developments? Richard Jantz, the editor of *Super 8 Filmaker* magazine believes that while video will cause a drop in amateur Super 8 activity, it will actually help professional Super 8 filmmakers who, in videocassettes and videodiscs, will find new channels of expression in an expanded market for their long-overlooked production efforts.

Maybe so. But the consensus among longtime observers of the audiovisual media is that Super 8 is doomed as a consumer product. Home movies became popular during the heyday of cinema, when people could fulfill their fantasies by seeing their image projected on a large screen in a darkened room. Today's consumers of home-entertainment systems grew up with the more intimate medium of television. There's no reason to doubt that as the equipment drops in price and weight, they too will fulfill their greatest wish—to be on television. ■

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RECORDS

by Stephen Wadsworth

Mozart's Music as He Heard It

Original-instrument ensembles are filling the recording studios, offering us revelatory perspectives on music of the 18th century. Numerous consorts have recorded everything baroque from Albinoni to Zelenka but have rarely invaded the classical period. Now one of the finest British groups, the Academy of Ancient Music, is putting the complete symphonies of Mozart into seven boxed sets for L'Oiseau Lyre.

The symphonies are grouped according to the locations for which they were written, the first release (on three discs) offering 11 symphonies composed by Mozart for Salzburg in 1772 and 1773, when he was 16 and 17 years of age. These performances enable us to climb into Mozart's head and hear instrumental timbres and orchestral textures through his ears. Authentically reproduced, his art of orchestration sounds quite different from what we are accustomed to.

So what difference do old instruments make? Generally speaking, they are less powerful and less mellow than their modern counterparts and are played with little or no vibrato. Dissonances on gut-stringed violins have a theatrical pungency; valveless natural horns make a bright, almost raucous sound; and wooden flutes, limited in projection and dynamic range, make a wistful sound. Each has a characterful timbre; combined, their rawness quickens the pulse.

For this recording, the Academy of Ancient Music is led by Jaap Schröder and Christopher Hogwood who position their orchestra as Mozart might have. The separation of the softest and loudest instruments (wooden flutes and natural trumpets) allows both to be heard distinctly; the separation of first and second violins enhances their continual give and take.

This makes for a light, transparent texture: Inner voices—keening viola lines, for example—are distinct from the rest and one another, rhythmic patterns and nuances of phrasing can be heard in vivid detail. In addition, the tempos are brisk, the playing is vibrant, and the recording is clear and spacious. It's absolutely first-rate, and so addictive that you'll start to imagine the more familiar symphonies, or even *Don Giovanni*, played this way.

The first two movements of K. 141a, included in this volume, double as the overture to *Il Sogno di Scipione*, a dramatic serenade recently released complete with the Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra on modern instruments under Leopold Hager (Deutsche Gramophon, three discs). Comparing the two performances of this overture is a sobering experiment. The Mozarteum flutes and trumpets—also their first and second violins—sit right next to each other. They play extremely well, but string attacks sport a lively vibrato uncharacteristic of 18th-century performing practice, and the powerful modern winds and brass beef up and generalize the overall texture, swallowing the inner voices.

The shape of the piece is intact, but textural clarity is gone in favor of romantic sweep and a brawny sound that is far from what Mozart could have imagined. Nevertheless, and despite Mozart's obvious lack of sympathy for a dull, static text, this recorded *Sogno di Scipione* is a welcome bit of work and features some dizzying virtuoso singing by sopranos Edita Gruberova, Lucia Popp, and Edith Mathis.

By any standard of authentic performing practice, Jean-Pierre Rampal, on his new disc of the fanciful Concerto for Flute and Harp, K. 299 (CBS Masterworks), gives an object lesson in how *not* to play and conduct Mozart. As flutist, Rampal is fleet and suave, but the cadenzas are bizarre Max Reinhardt spectaculars that sound more like Rimsky-Korsakov than Mozart. As conductor, he is indulgent, and his sticky-sweet movieland andantino finds the English Chamber Orchestra off form—orchestral textures flat, string vibrato verging on tremolo.

By comparison, an original-instruments traversal of the same concerto (MCA), with Frans Vester playing a wooden flute, is gingerly and almost effortful, but the instrument's comically fragile sound and Vester's true tone pick their way, Chaplinesque, right to the heart, showing us the real romance of this music. Rampal's Mozart is romantic in a way that old instruments tell us Mozart never could have been. ■

Stephen Wadsworth, past managing editor of *Opera News*, contributes articles to many musical publications here and abroad.

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DIVERSIONS

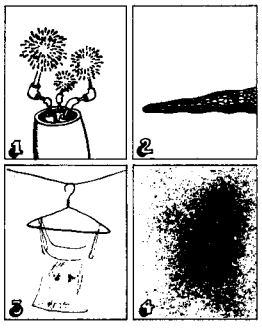
SR Competition No. 14

My wife and I (forgive this abandonment of the editorial "we" but "our wife and we..." seemed to us little short of foreign sounding) once whiled away a point 6 gale in Key West by playing a word-game that arose quite by accident. I had drawn a cartoon that she loyally declared to be funny, an opinion that no editor has ever shared: Two men were sitting at a bar and one says to the other, "Technically I am a macaroon—one of my great-grandparents was a coconut." The game was to search out what proved to be a myriad of English words ending in the sound *-oon* and, on the pattern of "octaroon" and "quadroon," suggest what ancestor might have been responsible. No limit on the number of submissions, but we shall select the three best sets of three as winners. Prize $25.

Entries for Competition No. 14 must be received by December 5 and the winners will be announced in the February 1981 issue. Send submissions to *SR* Competition No. 14, *Saturday Review*, 150 East 58 Street, New York, N.Y. 10155. All entries become the property of *SR*.

Winners of No. 11

In August we asked you to describe with brevity and wit two of the following four objects, reprinted here:



First prize to Lysander Kemp of Harwich, Massachusetts, who, like many others, was inspired by drawing one to prodigies of plumbagainaceous paronomasia (look it up):

1) A new and leggy variety
Of the Leadwort, or Plumbago,
Hybridized by a plumber
Suffering from lumbago

2) The tip of the tail of a skink
By the Ashcan School, I think.
In any case not an Art-Deco
Tip of the tail of a gecko.

Second prize to Jay J. Welch of Houston:

1) A specimen of roses of lead. Roses of lead grow in dark, damp, fetid places, such as basements, and are quite poisonous, producing a virulent form of plumbism, for which the only known treatment is the frequent ingestion of ethyl alcohol. Also thought to cause cirrhosis of the liver.

2) The tail of a reticulated triton of Terlingua (*Triturus* (sic) *reticulatus* sp. Terlingua), a ghost town in arid West Texas, where it subsists on Texas Red, a violent form of chili. Dormant between the annual chili cook-offs, this bad-tempered little salamander will attack anyone found with a can of beans in his territory, which accounts for the fact that no bean has ever been found in a bowl of Texas Red.

God forbid we should become embroiled in one of the Texas chili wars, but we thought readers would be amused by Welch's location of the triton—an *aquatic* salamander, of course—in the desert, to say nothing of his hilarious Linnean Latin.

Third prize to David J. Daulton of Columbus, Ohio, who realized with understandable shock that he had *seen all these things* in the Smithsonian Institution:

2) A prototype of the ice-cream cone, the initial failure of which was probably due to its having been fabricated from chicken wire.

4) Lower part of the first draft of the Declaration of Independence, ruined by John Hancock, who, just as he picked up the pen, sneezed.

Twenty-five dollars to each winner.

Finally, remember our contest calling for parodies of Julia A. Moore, the Sweet Singer of Michigan? Where was Irene Webster of Mount Morris, Illinois, when we needed her? Her description of object two:

This is my finger all calloused and bent
From writing the entries that I have sent.
'Tis knobby and worn
And points in scorn
Till the day when I get some acknowledgment.

Puzzles

Literary Crypt No. 159

BY THE MAD SKY CRUSHLYU AM AND HXZYUSADU, HXP RS UYYCU AXOE MHRD SKHS SKYE UKANOP OYHQY NU SKY CAXYE SA THE BRXK.

PAX CHDINRU

Wit Twister No. 171

Edited by Arthur Swan

The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged, will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash with a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.

The dread gestapo_____the silent streets.
Thugs_____the senator from sleep-creased sheets,
And like the_____at a column's base,
Crouch round the lofty man, whose granite face
And_____expression take each one aback.
His gesture_____the ruffianly pack.

A.S.

Answers next issue

October Answers

Solution to Literary Crypt. No. 158

Absence extinguishes small passions and increases great ones, as the wind will blow out a candle, and blow in a fire.

La Rochefoucauld

Solution to Wit Twister No. 170

lameness, salesmen, nameless, maleness

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 200

(RICHARD) ARMOUR: CLASSICS RECLASSIFIED

How she became George Eliot is not clear. . . .

George was mixed up from the first. "She had the mind of a man and the heart of a woman," says one scholar, who might have gained a wide readership had he continued this anatomical analysis to the end.

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Instructions:
If you've never solved one of these puzzles, it will probably look much more difficult than it actually is. If you can answer only a few of the WORDS correctly, you're on your way to solving the puzzle. Fill in the numbered blanks of all the WORDS you can guess and write the letter of each numbered blank in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. The letters printed in the upper-right-hand corners of the squares indicate from what WORD a particular square's letter comes.
The diagram, when filled in, should read as a quotation from a published work. The dark squares are the spaces between words. If there is no dark square at the end of a line, a word may *carry over to the line below.*
The first letter of each WORD, reading down, will spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation is taken.
You should find yourself seeing words and phrases taking form in the diagram; so you can work back and forth, from WORDS to diagram and from diagram to WORDS, until the diagram is filled in.

1 D	2 F	3 K	4 X	5 Z	6 S	7 O	8 G	■	9 F	10 N	11 Y	■	12 C	13 W	14 U	15 P	16 N	17 A
18 O	19 Q	■	20 B	21 E	22 M	23 H	■	24 A	25 G	26 Y	27 S	28 F	29 K	30 V	■	31 B	32 Z^1	33 R
34 T	35 O	36 F	37 E	38 P	39 U	■	40 A	41 O	42 Z^1	■	43 V	44 Z	45 U	■	46 K	47 V	48 E	49 I
50 X	51 Y	■	52 B	53 F	54 G	55 P	56 C	57 N	58 S	■	59 Y	60 E	61 O	62 Z	63 A	64 Z^1	65 J	66 H
■	67 S	68 Z^1	69 A	■	70 X	71 Y	72 F	73 L	■	74 M	75 Y	76 O	77 E	78 A	79 Z^1	80 C	81 S	82 I
83 B	84 U	85 N	■	86 H	87 E	88 X	89 Y	■	90 B	91 A	92 Q	93 M	94 S	95 W	96 I	97 O	98 C	■
99 U	100 O	■	101 E	102 P	103 A	104 W	105 Z^2	106 F	107 T	108 U	109 G	110 C	111 K	112 B	■	113 H	114 X	■
115 I	116 J	117 M	118 O	119 K	120 Y	121 F	122 Q	■	123 A	124 G	125 Z^1	126 C	127 B	■	128 Z^2	129 E	130 I	131 X
■	132 O	133 U	134 L	135 M	136 J	137 V	138 W	■	139 U	■	140 P	141 E	142 T	143 N	144 Z^1	■	145 Q	146 T
■	147 H	148 C	149 R	150 Q	151 M	152 T	153 Z^1	154 U	155 V	156 E	157 S	■	158 A	159 Z^2	160 B	■	161 M	162 C
163 J	164 P	165 Z^1	166 K	167 D	■	168 Z^2	169 M	170 G	171 I	■	172 A	173 N	174 C	175 Z^2	■	176 U	■	177 X
178 L	179 B	■	180 E	181 U	182 Z	■	183 T	184 C	185 N	186 I	■	187 Y	■	188 W	189 B	190 F	191 S	192 D
193 G	■	194 A	195 Z^2	■	196 Y	197 B	198 L	199 P	200 U	201 W	202 S	203 N	204 V	205 H	206 O	■	207 H	208 J
209 V	■	210 N	211 R	■	212 O	213 I	214 F	215 L	216 B	217 T	218 W	■	219 R	220 Z^1	221 N	■	222 Z^2	223 E
224 Q	225 A	226 U	227 Y	228 S	229 X	230 H	231 B	■	232 O	233 F	234 W	235 D	236 B	237 N	238 X	239 K	240 C	■

Middleton Double-Crostic No. 201

CLUES

A. Constituted order or system
17 63 59 78 158 172 194 225 24 40 91 103 123

B. 1949 play by Sidney Kingsley (2 wds.)
179 189 20 236 31 90 83 52 112 127 160 197 216 231

C. Sacred island in the Inland Sea, Japan (comp.)
56 80 98 162 174 184 240 12 110 126 148

D. Duds, garb
167 192 235 1

E. Pilot, business executive, aircraft designer, film producer (1905-76; full name)
21 37 48 60 77 180 223 87 101 129 141 156

F. In a spirit of brotherhood
9 36 53 106 121 190 214 233 28 72 2

G. Cap. of Loiret dept., France
25 54 109 124 170 193 8

H. Procures the passage of (a bill) by political maneuvering; indulges in a lumberjack's sport
147 207 23 66 113 205 230 86

I. "Sweet is the ___ morn" (2 wds., "Paradise Lost")
49 82 96 130 171 186 213 115

J. Scoundrel; knave; scamp
116 136 163 208 65

K. Out of order or control, as implying a loss of coherence; unglued; freed from fastening
239 3 166 119 29 46 111

L. Spruce, trim
134 178 198 215 73

M. Paragon, ideal, model
93 117 135 151 161 22 74 169

N. Solid figure having twenty faces
173 185 210 143 203 16 85 221 237 10 57

O. She plays Mrs. Pynchon on the *Lou Grant* television show (full name)
61 76 100 132 206 7 18 97 212 35 41 118 232

P. Mars, injures
15 38 55 102 164 199 140

Q. Neat, methodical
145 108 19 92 122 150 224

R. Carry lightly and smoothly through the air or over water
149 219 211 33

S. "A nice man is a man of ___" (2 wds.; Swift, "Thoughts on Various Subjects")
67 94 157 58 6 202 27 81 228 191

T. Mollifies, melts, eases
183 217 146 34 107 142 152

U. Setup, structure, composition
181 14 45 139 154 226 84 176 39 99 133 200

V. Blotched in coloring
30 47 137 209 204 155 43

W. Large, ovoid, purple-skinned fruit, eaten as a vegetable
138 95 104 188 218 13 234 201

X. Something capable of moving from place to place
229 4 88 50 177 70 131 238 114

Y. The art of drawing ground plans
120 227 89 71 26 59 11 187 196 75 51

Z. Shave for shaping dowels and handles
5 44 62 182

Z^1. Covered with a hard coating
165 220 79 125 32 153 64 144 42

Z^2. Leaves a place, esp. briefly (2 wds.)
105 128 175 222 195 68 159 168

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SR RECOMMENDS

Books

Fiction

The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 576 pp., $14.95). With the release of this collection of every story she has ever published, Eudora Welty takes her rightful place in the classic company of Chekhov, Maupassant, and Poe. She is one of the few Southern writers who are not moralists. She does not guide the reader to think as she does; there is no "right," no "wrong," only that rare thing called compassion, sensuously evoked.

Horn of Africa, by Philip Caputo (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 491 pp., $12.95). The length to which three men will go when "free to exceed the bounds of acceptable human conduct" is the subject of Philip Caputo's first novel. His intuitive grasp of human motivation, flair for the theatrical, and descriptive acuity prod us into a startling reevaluation of man stripped of personal illusions and denied civilization's ethical restraints.

Rites of Passage, by William Golding (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 320 pp., $10.95). The author of the brilliant and disturbing *Lord of the Flies* and its modern version, *Darkness Visible*, has given us a companion volume in which 19-century pretensions become the foil for Golding's shattering study of the bounds of moral responsibility. *Rites of Passage* is as deftly constructed, troubling, and incandescently illuminating as its predecessors.

Nonfiction

Lectures on Literature, Vladimir Nabokov, edited by Fredson Bowers (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 344 pp., $19.95). The delightful bias behind this collection of teaching lectures is that "great novels are great fairy tales." Nabokov's celebrated cantankerousness is much in evidence here, but the emphasis is on the magic and rapture of words, a theme irresistibly reinforced by the dazzle of Nabokov's own style.

A Choice of Days, by H.L. Mencken (Alfred A. Knopf, 352 pp., $12.95), edited by Edward L. Galligan. A welcome abridgment and reissue of the sage of Baltimore's mellifluous memoirs (*Happy Days*, *Newspaper Days*, and *Heathen Days*). Mencken may never regain the enormous reputation he enjoyed as *the* intellectual of the 1920s, but as an acute and surprisingly amiable chronicler of an era, his voice will endure.

The Letters of Evelyn Waugh, edited by Mark Amory (Ticknor & Fields, 656 pp., $25). Elegantly contrived, moving, and witty, these are not strictly the letters of a man of letters: There are no powerful dissections of Proust (who is merely a booby) or George Eliot (whose *Middlemarch* is a bore). Evelyn Waugh reads detective stories, goes to White's to get drunk, disgraces himself in a first-class railway carriage. The toughest Catholic of our age, he loves his children and worries about them. He teases them too, terribly.

Naming Names, by Victor S. Navasky (The Viking Press, 482 pp., $15.95). Here it is again, the story of the House Committee on Un-American Activities and its 1950s investigation of Hollywood. Victor Navasky "pans back" and looks at the larger darkness that was its setting. With considerable detective skills, he recreates the complex pressures the Committee brought to bear on those who informed. The informers named names; but the admirably thorough Navasky here tells their story only to name the heroes.

Twentieth Century Odyssey: The Life of John Dos Passos, by Townsend Ludington (E.P. Dutton, 548 pp., $20). Townsend Ludington, editor of Dos Passos's diaries and letters, is in some ways his subject's ideal biographer: world-minded, deft at memorable characterization, alive to social context and poetic detail. This authorized, clear, even-tempered biography of the author of the *U.S.A.* trilogy and *Manhattan Transfer* should restore Dos Passos as an artist and give new life to his best work.

SR's Phoenix Code

- Outstanding
- Excellent
- Good
- Notable

Film

Ordinary People. Robert Redford makes a triumphant directorial debut with this adaptation of Judith Guest's novel. Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore, and Tim Hutton provide us, in a touching drama of a family in crisis, with an acute perception and understanding of parental responsibility and filial response.

Gloria. Gena Rowlands casts the glow over this John Cassavetes film about a tough dame on the run for the sake of a small boy, painting a stylish portrait of a latter-day gun moll who packs a gat and a heart of gold.

Theater

Home (Cort Theater, New York City). The Negro Ensemble Company comes as close to being a true ensemble as any troupe around. Its actors have made this story—of a young black farmer trying out city life, then returning to the land and to clarity—into their own, overcoming its weaknesses, fulfilling it.

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SR RECOMMENDS Continued

The Elephant Man (Booth Theater, New York City). The play—not the movie. An innocent but monstrously disfigured man becomes a socially modish figure in Victorian London. The play satirizes antiquated morality (always an easy target), but its sense of humanity is honest and moving.

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas (46th Street Theater, New York City). The self-serving forces of televised righteousness close down a small Texas bordello that isn't hurting anybody. A true story—if romantically embellished—this musical is funny, touching, and rousing—and less salacious than you might suppose.

Records

Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 and **Overture in D** (fourth orchestral suite), J.S. Bach (Archiv). The English Concert, playing on old instruments, has now recorded all four orchestral suites in springy, intimate performances. Their only Brandenburg is ravishingly delicate and stylish. Trevor Pinnock, directing from the keyboard, stops time in the magical harpsichord fantasia.

Cello Concertos, Saint-Saens and Lalo (CBS Mastersound, digital). Young cellist Yo Yo Ma's warm, singing tone makes lyric masterpieces of these cops-and-robbers concertos. A promising debut album from a great talent, with muscular accompaniment from L'Orchestre National de France under Lorin Maazel.

Rigoletto, Verdi (Deutsche Gramophon, 3 discs). Piero Cappuccilli, Ileana Cotrubas, Placido Domingo, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Elena Obraztsova, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. Currently conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Carlo Maria Giulini's first opera recording in 10 years is soft-edged and occasionally lacks fire, but it has Mozartean grace, sincere characterizations, and moments of greatness.

Scheherazade, Ravel (Philips). Being in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw is a sonic treat, and Philips's fabulous sound puts you there. Conductor Kiril Kondrashin's reading is persuasive, often hypnotic; the Concertgebouw's first-chair players are especially fine.

Dance

Joffrey Ballet (City Center, New York City). Twenty-three ballets, including 11 premieres (new works or new productions), will be given during the four-week New York season. Highlights include a new ballet by Robert Joffrey (*Postcards*, set to cafe songs of Erik Satie); the company premiere of Sir Frederick Ashton's *Illuminations*, to music of Benjamin Britten; the first American production of *Return to the Strange Land*, choreographed to music of Janacek by Jiri Kylian, director of the Netherlands Dance Theater and one of the major choreographers of today. (Through November 23.)

Art

Edward Hopper Retrospective (Whitney Museum of Art, New York City). Throughout his long career Hopper remained entranced by the bleak and powerful light of solitude in the American countryside, along the New England shore, and in the heart of our largest cities. In this exhibition, the largest so far for this major American visionary, well-known favorites—"Nighthawks," "Office at Night"—get strong competition from numerous lesser known works of remarkable power. (Through January 18.)

The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism (The Metropolitan Museum of Art at the Cloisters, New York City). The early genealogy of a figure who still tempts our imaginations with hopes of primal innocence and absolutely new beginnings. Sixty works in a variety of media document the medieval wild man's evolution from demon to the noble savage of the Renaissance. (Through January 12.)

Poets and Painters (Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California). An exhibition of the work of contemporary artists chosen by contemporary poets. Ever since the time of Baudelaire's friendship with Delacroix, poets and painters have been close. The tradition continues in America as this strong and, of course, opinionated show attests. Some of the poets choosing: John Ashbery, Peter Schjeldahl, Ron Padgett, Carter Ratcliff, Kenneth Koch, Bill Berkson, Barbara Guest. Some of the painters chosen: Rafael Ferrer, Rudy Burckhardt, Yvonne Jacquette, John Seery, Jasper Johns, Willem DeKooning, Alex Katz.

Photography

Diane Arbus (Frankel Gallery, San Francisco). A surprising view of early work by one of our most disturbing photographic masters. The show vividly illustrates Arbus's abiding curiosity, not just about *angst* and oddity, but about everything in the world around her.

Barbara Morgan: A 55-Year Retrospective (Douglas Elliott Gallery, San Francisco). Now in her energetic eighties, Morgan looks back on a career in which she helped set the standard for dance photography with her remarkable pictures of Martha Graham, and extensively explored the possibilities of photomontage.

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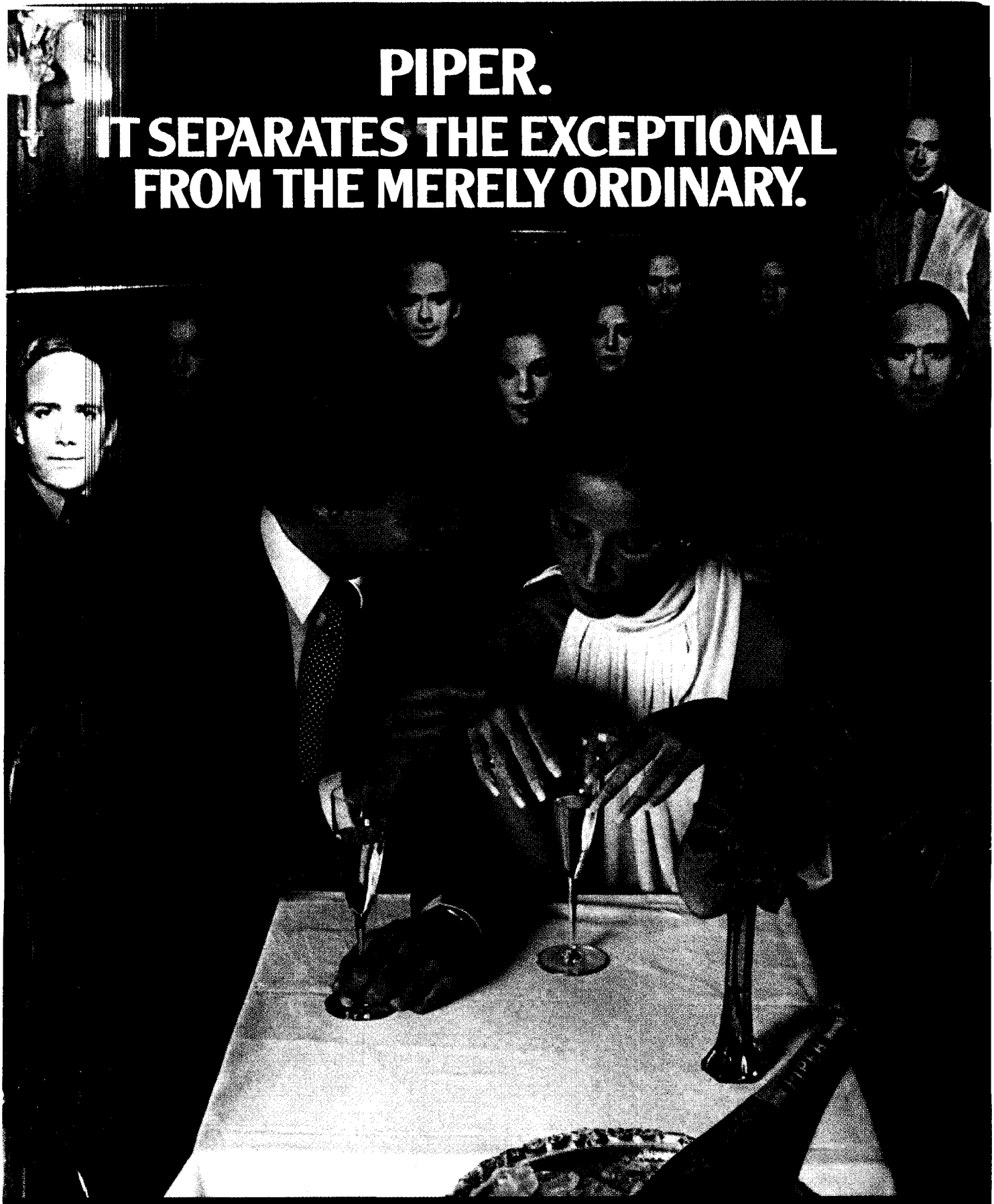

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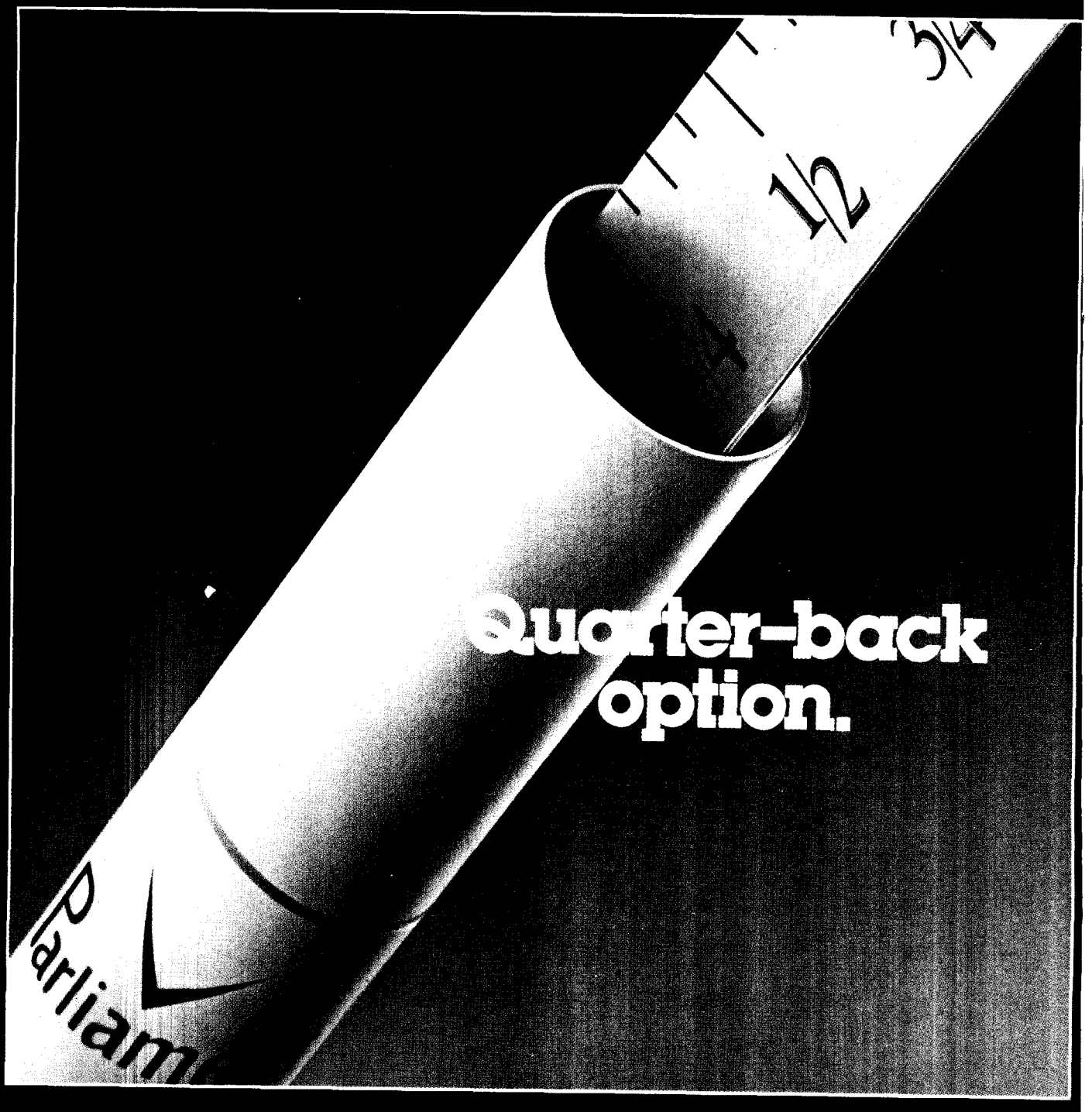

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